

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1330016

BT
736.4
H39



The Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

Read

Indexed

Emel
X5

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

136.4
H39

3/6 2nd

mer

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

Martin

BY
R. TRAVERS HERFORD, B.A.

THE LINDSEY PRESS
5 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.
1920

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

PRINTED BY ELSOM AND CO., LTD.
MARKET PLACE, HULL.

PREFACE

THE substance of the following pages was originally given as a series of addresses. It is now presented in more general form.

I am grateful to the LINDSEY PRESS for the opportunity of offering to a wider circle of readers any help or suggestion they may find in what is here written.

R. T. H.

DR. WILLIAMS' LIBRARY,
LONDON.

March, 1920.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION . . .	I
-------------------------------	---

CHAPTER II

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION . . .	25
--------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION . . .	52
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION . . .	75
-----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER V

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION . . .	102
-------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VI

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION . . .	125
----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER I

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

THE following pages are intended and offered as a contribution towards the rebuilding of the fabric of our common life, which has been so greatly strained and shaken by the war. In one way or another the work of rebuilding will have to be done ; to let it alone would lead to worse confusion than there is at present, and would leave the way open for whatever is evil in the present state of things to breed fresh evil, till in the end the whole social order would come down with a crash.

It is surely the duty of every one to give his or her serious thought to the task which confronts our own nation—indeed all the nations. And while this is the duty of all, there is a special duty

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

laid upon those who are appointed to be leaders and counsellors in religion, the ministers and clergy of all the churches. It is not their business to offer suggestions upon the practical method to be applied in this or that particular case, for example, the nationalization of the mines or the railways. Upon such questions, their hearers are quite as well able to judge as they are, and, from the nature of the case, probably better. A minister who directs his preaching to such purposes misses the opportunity of saying what alone he would be justified in saying, and of contributing what it is the special function of the churches and their ministers to contribute. That contribution is to bring out the *religious* side of the whole problem, to present it as a matter not only of work and wages, labour and capital, methods of education, schemes for the union of the churches, and so forth, but of the needs and aspirations, the thoughts and ideals, of men and women who are in the last resort living souls and children of God. What is needed here is the attempt to

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

set forth the larger and deeper meaning of the whole problem, the principles and fundamental realities which underlie the details of the separate problems. Some of those fundamental realities lie in the region where religion has its source ; and the practical application of those principles will vary according as religion is or is not taken into account. Moreover, our judgment of some particular case where reconstruction seems required, will be more likely to be sound if we are able to understand how the situation has come about, and how the various problems are related together as results and expressions of a few main causes. And some at least of those main causes are closely connected with religion.

In what I say, therefore, in this and the succeeding chapters, I shall try to set forth what seem to me the general principles applicable to all reconstruction ; and shall make no attempt to deal with the practical method to be adopted in this or that or the other case.

I have laid out the general line of

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

thought accordingly. In this first chapter I shall deal with the case for reconstruction, what reconstruction means and in what sense it is necessary, what it implies and what it does not imply. In the next chapter I shall consider the forces of reconstruction, by which I mean the forces which have brought about the present need for reconstruction. Then I shall examine the permanent basis of reconstruction, the foundation in human nature and divine reality upon which alone any enduring structure of thought and life can be built. This will open the way for the consideration in the fourth chapter of the place of religion and its influence upon the other factors in reconstruction. The fifth will deal with the price of reconstruction, by which I mean the loss of the old for the sake of the new, the hardship of change, the necessary consequence of adjustment to new conditions. And finally, I shall try to show the aim of the whole process of reconstruction in the realization of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

Naturally, and logically, that comes last ; but I have that in mind from the beginning, and I mention it now to indicate that my point of view throughout is that of hope, not of doubt or anxiety, still less of despair. I am not so foolish as to expect that the present confusion will be straightened out in a few months or years ; I make no doubt that there will be many difficulties and disappointments, and discouragements, perhaps dangers ; but still, even if the immediate prospect were blacker than it is, I believe that the fundamental meaning of the whole state of the world to-day is something like what Paul described as the deliverance ‘ from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.’

My concern at present is with the case for reconstruction, the kind of answer to be given if one should be asked what need is there for reconstruction, and what do you mean by reconstruction ? And what is going to be reconstructed ? By way of making a definite start with a subject which is

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

in its details so vast and so bewildering, I will take the remark which one hears so often, that '*the war has changed all that.*' We hear it applied to all sorts of subjects from the least to the greatest in importance. We have grown accustomed during the war to various forms of control, loss of freedom of action in this way or that, curtailment of our liberties as citizens which the powers that be seem in no hurry to restore to us. The war has changed much in the manners and customs of our social life, it has brought in new ideas and new points of view from which to look upon life, opened up new possibilities for good and for evil. This is plain to be seen wherever we turn. But it is not at all true that there is a clear dividing line between the time before or during the war and the time now, such that what was a fact then is not a fact now, or what was the standard of right and wrong then is replaced by some other standard now; or that what was true then is false now, or what was false then is true now. What distinction can

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

be drawn is only in regard to definite events or actions which took place formerly and do not take place now, as, for example, that air-raids have ceased; but for all intents and purposes nearly everything that was in the former time is still to be found in the present time. Whatever change the war may have wrought has not been made by sweeping the old things away and putting a set of new things in their place; it has been by altering the relations and values of the things which go to make up the world order. Say that there were so many and such and such institutions, facts, truths, habits, customs, beliefs, practices, and so forth, which together made up the structure of human life as we knew it in the former time. All these (or practically all) are present now, as truly factors in human life as they were then. But the way in which they are related to each other is different from what it was in the former time, and results may be expected to follow from them different from the results which formerly followed from them. It is

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

misleading to say as the Prime Minister said a while ago that the old world has gone and the new world has come. As a shrewd critic remarked : ' that may be true ; but the new world has taken over all the liabilities of the old.' Which only means that we are back again in the old world, with the task of building up gradually, with what courage and patience and wisdom we may possess, something that can at last be called a really new world. And we shall have to build it with the material of the old, for there is nothing else to build it of.

To say that ' the war has changed all that' is almost always untrue, if it be taken to mean that the war has swept away and replaced by something else the object in regard to which the statement is made. It may be true, as I said, in regard to some definite event or class of events which happened formerly and does not happen now. But it is untrue in regard to almost everything else, and it is increasingly false as the objects to which it is applied are more and more fundamental. The Moral

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

Law is not changed ; and if it be said that conduct is justified now which would have been considered wrong in the former time, I reply that it is not justified by any change in the moral standard by which it is judged. Thus, the institution of marriage represents what may be called a settled and recorded decision in regard to the relation of the sexes, founded upon the experience of the human race and its recognition of the moral law. Actions which formerly were an infringement of the sanctity of marriage, are not now justified or justifiable through any change that the war has brought about. Because, the standard by which such acts must be judged remains unchanged. They would be justifiable and justified, i.e., they would become right, if the enlightened conscience of the best of the human race discerned in such acts the expression of a higher and purer morality than the highest and purest which has even yet been discerned and formulated. Short of that, such actions will remain wrong.

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

And to say, by way of excuse or defence of them, that the war has changed all the old ideas about right and wrong—in this case the ideas about the sanctity of marriage and the right relations of the sexes—is to throw over the higher in the interest of the lower. It is not that the war or anything else has, or even could have, changed the higher into the lower ; it is that the war has given to some the opportunity and the excuse for breaking away from the restraint of the higher, and seeking satisfaction in the lower. The same is true of all departures from the moral law, on the plea that the war has changed the old ideas about right and wrong in conduct. Such departure is or would be only justifiable and therefore right, if the action, whatever it be, expresses a higher and purer morality than the older ; if it be such that the moral condition of mankind would be raised and not lowered if every one were to go and do likewise. But wherever an action, which is justified on the ground that the war has swept away the old ideas

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

about right and wrong, expresses a lower morality than the former, where, if such action became general, the moral condition of the race would go *down* instead of *up*, then such action is wrong and not right—war or no war.

What the war has changed, and what alone it has changed, is the relation in which the various factors in life stand to each other. It has loosened in many directions the ties which bound them together. It has strained and twisted things out of their former shape, so to speak. It has thrown many things out of gear, so that they will not work as they used to do. It has set other things working which were formerly inactive. It has led people to think differently about all sorts of things, it has made possible what used to be thought impossible, it has awakened new hopes and disclosed new dangers, it has given occasion for splendid heroism and self-sacrifice, it has opened the way for crime and disorder, it has disclosed a vision of the kingdom of heaven, and it has weakened the hold of morality

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

and religion (as hitherto organized and expressed) upon the allegiance of those who formerly owned their authority. It taught all the members of the nation to act together and bear the common burden, share in the common duty, and grieve for the common sorrow. It bred a spirit of hatred and vengeance against the enemy, and the habit of mind which is accustomed to military rule, and enforces the methods of what is called Prussianism upon a nation which has grown to what it is with a whole-hearted hatred of Prussianism. It has, from sheer necessity, laid heavy burdens upon the commerce and industry of the country, and the burdens have been cheerfully borne. It has left commerce and industry crippled and fettered in every direction, and the national finances in a state of appalling confusion. And so on and so on, through a long list which the reader can complete for himself. But the point of the whole is this, that what is new in all this is the changed relation and value of the several things I have named; they

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

themselves are what they used to be ; they have not been swept away, hardly any of them. And the case for reconstruction is the need of bringing all this confusion into order, putting together again these dislocated pieces so as to form a whole once more. And the particular problem is how to do this so that the new order shall be as far as possible better than the old, what was good in the old being strengthened and extended and made more effective, and what was bad in the old being if possible got rid of, and if not that, then controlled and lessened.

That is the meaning of Reconstruction, and that is what has got to be done in respect of practically every department of thought and life. Every particular problem that now or in the future comes up for solution is or will be a special case of that one main problem.

It goes without saying that no one would be satisfied for the present state of confusion to remain as it is, if that were possible, which it is not. Even whose who, as the saying goes, are

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

‘ fishing in the troubled waters ’ of this present time, making their own profit out of the general disorder, would suffer if the disorder were not checked and brought under control. Every one else, which means the great majority of the nation desires to see an end of the confusion, and an end such that the new order to be established shall be greatly better than the old one in many respects. Some there are, how many I cannot tell, who wish to go back to the old order, to rebuild exactly as it was the structure that has been shattered, so that they may live in it just as they used to do, enjoying the same security for their privileges and whatever made life easy and prosperous for them. And others there are, again I know not how many, but including all the progressive elements in the nation, who desire that what is built up shall be in many respects different from the old, and different in all such ways as shall make for a higher standard of life all round. These are they who have seen, whether they know it or not, some vision of the

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

Kingdom of God upon earth, and who believe that now is the time to realize that vision in actual fact.

Others in older times have had glimpses of the same vision, and while it is true that what we are going through now is a social upheaval on a scale to which history affords no parallel, there is nevertheless something to be learned from the experience of men in ancient days who have looked forward from the world as it is to the world as it ought to be. I place side by side two sayings by teachers, both of whom spoke under the influence of that vision of the Kingdom of God upon earth. One is the prophet known as the second Isaiah, and the other is the writer of the Book of Revelation; not a prophet but a man whose mind dwelt constantly on the contrast between the world as he knew it, and the ideal world of his inward vision. The prophet said 'Prepare ye *in the wilderness* the way of the Lord.' And the other said 'I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem *coming down out of heaven* from God.' These two sayings

Is 40³
Rev 21²

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

indicate two ways of approaching the practical problem of reconstruction, by those who are set to make the new order better than the old. Of those who desire simply to restore the old as it was, I have nothing to say. The thing is impossible, and if it were possible would be deplorable, the deliberate refusal of the greatest opportunity that has ever been offered to mankind. I leave all that on one side, and deal only with what may be called for short the progressive movement.

The two texts just quoted represent the two main types of those who work for the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth—whether they call it by that name or not. In each of the two texts there is of course a figure of speech which is easily understood—in the one case the way of the Lord, the road made ready for him to come to his own; in the other, the heavenly city, the ideal order of human life, of holiness, love and peace. Both these figures may be taken to mean the same thing as the Kingdom of God upon

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

earth. In each case there is suggested life as it ought to be under the influence, guidance and inspiration of God. In each case is suggested that which every one longs for who loves God and his fellow men—what we in this present time long for as truly as ever did prophet and seer in the days of old.

1. So much for the likeness between the thoughts expressed in these two sayings. Now observe the difference. The first text says ‘Prepare ye *in the wilderness* the way of the Lord,’ which means this :—Make ready here and now in the world as it now is, the better order which is to be. Build up the new out of the old, take what is good in the old and make it better, more effective for good, the means of a higher and more inclusive benefit to those who shall live in it. Put away what was bad in the old, so that it shall have no place in the new. The way of the Lord can be made ready, but it is in the wilderness that the work will have to be done, the work of making it ready. ‘Every valley shall be exalted,’ said that same

Reforms

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

prophet, 'and every mountain and hill shall be made low.' Doubtless, but it is only by human toil, and patience and faith that that task shall be accomplished. 'And the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain.' Surely. But only by those who will suffer and spend their strength and give themselves to that great service, and not lose heart in the doing of it. The desired change can be brought about, the new order established in place of the old ; but only by gradual effort and steadfast devotion applied to things as they are, the ruins of the old order as they surround us in this present time.

2. That is one method. Now for the other. The second text says 'I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, *coming down out of heaven*, from God.' Which means this:—That the new order of things is not to be built up out of the old, but is to be put in the place of the old, at once and complete. The old order is to be swept away, as being entirely and incurably bad. Even what

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

was good in it is so blended with and dependent on what was bad, that the whole must go and make way for a completely new order, perfect and entire, lacking in nothing. Of what was contained in the old order nothing is to be allowed to taint with its presence the purity of the new. The writer of this text says in the same chapter that there was to be a new heaven and a new earth, meaning literally that the earth on which we live was to be destroyed utterly and a new unspoilt one put in its place. I am not concerned with the obvious difficulties of such a process, whether physical or moral. It implies a fresh creation *de novo*, and would need for its accomplishment a miracle so stupendous as to make all argument futile. But the point is this:—That it involves a complete and absolute breach between the old order and the new. It thus represents that type of social reformer who believes that the new order can only be established by methods of revolt and violence, and not by methods of gradual change. And

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

because he so believes, he denounces the existing order, or rather the existing *disorder*, of things, far more fiercely than the progressive reformer does, and far more sweepingly. He says it is all bad and ought to be all swept away—‘cast like rubbish to the void.’ The progressive reformer says it is not all bad, and that the good in it ought to be kept. Both agree in denouncing injustice and oppression and tyrannical selfishness, and in deploring the misery caused thereby. But a society in which there is so much of righteous indignation against wrong, so much of organized conscience against moral defects, and so much of strenuous effort for good, cannot be wholly evil. The very protest of revolt, in the name and for the sake of the new and better order, is nevertheless a factor and a very potent factor in the old order itself, part of the existing order; for it is present in the world to-day and the new order is not. And it is growing in intensity and in clearness of expression. It is evidence accordingly that the present order or

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

disorder includes good along with its abundant evil. And why should that good, that particular good of all others be swept away, and involved in the general condemnation? The *protest* of revolt is none the less the expression of indignant sympathy, the voice of the awakened conscience, the assertion of human brotherhood, although revolt *as a practical method* may be deemed futile, and disastrous to the cause on whose behalf it is used. RP It is extremely important that this distinction should be clearly kept in view, especially in these times when eager discussions and controversies about reconstruction become more loud and insistent every day. Those who condemn the methods of revolt, are not on that account any the less conscious of the wrongs against which it is urged that those methods of revolt should be used. They are none the less filled with sympathy towards those who suffer the wrongs, and none the less determined to right them. Indeed it is just because of that sympathy and that desire to set right the wrong of

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

the old order, that they deplore and condemn methods which seem to them only to hinder and not to help, the cause which both alike have at heart.

If the history of the past is anything to go by, there is not and there never has been, any short cut from the wholly evil to the wholly good, nor even from the entirely old to the entirely new. The new has always been built up out of the old. And if you say that the present is such an upheaval as the world has never seen, that only implies that such a sudden change from old to new is more impossible now than it ever was before. As for revolts and revolutions, I know that there have been such, and very successful ones too, and very beneficial to those who have come after them. I do not doubt that even the Russian revolution may some day bring forth some good result in proportion to the immense energy which it has let loose. It may be that what is taking place in our own country is a revolution, in its true and essential meaning. I do not know ; but this I do know, that all these

CASE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

revolutions—even that in Russia—have but shaken the old order and made it possible to replace some parts of it by better ones. In Russia it would seem that the process as yet has only got so far as the shaking and throwing down of the old ; but even in Russia, a great deal of the old remains, and in due time it will be built up again into the fabric of the new. It is much more to the purpose to observe that in all revolt that which has opened the way for greater good, what has been effective has been not the destruction and violence as such, but the moral and spiritual force in the minds of those who led the revolts. That is true now ; and how great those forces are, which are at work in the present turmoil, I shall show in the next chapter. It is the personal force which alone can produce any good. And the danger is that the personal force should fail to effect the good it ought to do, because it chooses the wrong means for its purpose, and tries to take the kingdom of heaven by storm.

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

The ancient seer says that he 'saw the holy city coming down out of heaven from God.' He may have seen it, in his rapt vision, but in actual fact it never came. The old earth was never swept away, nor the new city let down and planted upon the new earth. The new order has never come in that way, and all history teaches that it never will and never can come by the way of sudden breach between the old and the new. That is the way of miracle, and that kind of miracle has never been worked.

But from the days of the prophets, men and women have toiled patiently and faithfully, with courage and hope and trust in the living God, to prepare *in the wilderness* the way of the Lord. The crooked is being made straight and the rough places plain. As between the days of the prophets and our own the difference is not in thought but in word. They were for building the old waste places. We are for Reconstruction.

CHAPTER II

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

IN the preceding chapter I dealt with the case for reconstruction. In this chapter I shall consider the forces which have been and are at work in producing the present state of the civilized world, and no less in reconstructing it, though their effect in that direction has not yet begun to be visible. By the forces of reconstruction I do not mean the resources of statesmanship, the genius of reformers, the wisdom of thinkers, or the practical sagacity of organizers, or the common sense of ordinary people—all of which will be needed and will have to be applied to the various problems in their turn. These are what are needed in every crisis, and have been forthcoming, more

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

or less, whenever they were wanted. They are the only means available for a nation, or for the human race as a whole ; and I have nothing to say about them which would call for a special chapter in which to say it.

But it is a very different matter to try and discover the forces which have brought about the present state of the world, to try and disengage from the more obvious and immediate influences, the deep-lying causes whose effect is hardly to be detected in the passing events and changes of the time but needs centuries to make it plain. If the new is to be built up out of the old, or to grow out of the old, it will do so in virtue of the fact that the present has grown up out of the past ; and that does not mean only that the events of this year are the result of the events of a year ago, or that the whole confusion of the present time is due to the war. Of course that is true as far as it goes, but it does not go very far. Even in the present state of the world there are many factors which are not due to the

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

war ; and the war itself did not come to pass without causes to bring it about. There was industrial unrest before the war, and ready to break out into strife. No doubt the war has intensified the unrest, but it did not produce it. There was religious unrest before the war, dissatisfaction with what is called organized religion, as expressed in doctrines and institutions, a widespread indifference to what was said or done by any of the churches, mainly because they were churches. There is much more of that now, but the war has only intensified what was there already. There were social problems before the war, and the war has but made them more acute and more pressing. Political affairs were in no calm and untroubled state before the war. The Parliament Act was not passed for nothing, nor the Home Rule Act ; and if there had been no war there would still have been much to be done in the directions indicated by those two names. There were changes going on in literature and art, in philosophy, in science, in wellnigh every

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

department of thought. The war has left its mark upon all, but only because they were there first. And they were there because of causes which lie further back.

All these things show their effects on the surface ; and on the surface can be seen the immediate causes of them, as numerous and perplexing as their effects. To try and unravel even a small part of them would be an endless business.

Instead of wasting time upon such an attempt, I will start further back, at one of the great turning-points in history and show if I can the connexion between that time and the present ; a connexion indirectly through the complex web of cause and effect on the surface, such as I have just indicated but directly through one deep-lying slow-working force which underlies them all. The great turning-point in history with which I shall deal is the period which included the revival of learning in the fifteenth century and the Reformation in the sixteenth. Of course, I know that there are no new beginnings

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

in history. The huge upheaval of the Reformation was in its turn prepared for by what went on in previous centuries. But all the same, there was *that* in the Reformation which marked such a change in the whole attitude of the human mind towards life in general as had not been seen since the early days of Christianity. If we count the rise of Christianity as the first in a series of world events of the very greatest magnitude, then the period of the Reformation is the second. And my present point is that what we are now going through is the third ; and that in all three, and notably in the second and third, there is the same deep-lying powerful force at work. As it showed itself in the turmoil and confusion, the controversy of every kind which filled the sixteenth century, and produced effects as widely contrasted in appearance as they could possibly be, so I believe that underneath all the confusion of this present time there is the same deep-lying force again at work, and producing directly or indirectly all the bewildering

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

and conflicting results that we see, and shall continue to see for many a long year. As it is impossible to take into one short chapter the whole period of history from the rise of Christianity, I begin with the Revival of learning and the Reformation. And observe, in passing, that both those names refer to something which preceded them. Learning was *revived*, not created. Religion, as organized in the Catholic Church, was *reformed*, not instituted for the first time. The new which came into being then, grew out of the old which had been before. So it will be again, and for the same reason.

Now the essential meaning of the Reformation I believe to be this:—It was the assertion by the human mind of a claim to greater liberty, its revolt against constraint, its need for room to expand in directions where up till then its growth had been hindered and forcibly prevented. And this in regard not only to individual persons, but in regard to large masses of mankind, including the more civilized nations of Europe.

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

The effect of the rise of Christianity had been, amongst other things, to add to the resources of the human mind to awaken in it new powers and new aspirations, raise it in a sense to a higher plane, not only religious but intellectual, moral, and in short on every side of mental activity. On that higher plane, the human mind, as represented by its highest examples, continued to grow ; but its growth, in the course of centuries, gradually became cramped and constricted by the forms and institutions of the existing civilization, and above all by the authority of the Catholic Church. During the early centuries of Christianity that constraint had not been felt ; there was ample room for the mind within the limits of the theology and philosophy, the general organization of the church. And those who built up that great organization, notably Augustine, the master mind of them all, did a priceless service to the world at large, without which service Christianity would have gone down in the wreck of the Roman Empire in the west.

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

But the human mind continued to grow and the church did not; her power, indeed, increased, her splendour and prestige as a spiritual empire extending over the most enlightened part of mankind. But the lines which she had drawn defining the limits of thought and belief, of inquiry and research, these lines she maintained, fixed and unalterable; and within them the growing mind fretted and chafed and rebelled, with more insistent force as the slow centuries rolled by.

The signs of increasing uneasiness can be seen in the centuries before the Reformation, as here and there some daring thinkers uttered what the church condemned as a heresy, or some preacher denounced the corruption of the church and cried out for reform. Wiclif and Piers Plowman, Hus and Savonarola, each in his age and his way, gave expression to the growing sense of constraint; they saw ideals of truth which they were forbidden to follow, ideals of holiness to which the church was blind, ideals of liberty and justice

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

which were made vain because the authority of the church stood in the way. The controversies in which these men were engaged, the heresies and persecutions which followed on those controversies, turned upon questions of theology or morality or politics, according to the circumstances of the time and country. But in their real meaning they were signs to show how the human mind was growing in power, and how it felt more and more the limitation of its power by existing authority and the forms and institutions maintained by that authority. I do not say that any of the men I have referred to were themselves fully conscious of this, but that is what their various attempts really meant, and that is what connects them with each other and with what followed. The growing mind pressed more and more strongly against its barriers until at last the pressure became too great, the barriers gave way and the liberated mind sought and found freedom and exercise in every direction. That great effort to burst

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

the barriers began with the Revival of learning, and the crash came with the Reformation. The reader should keep in mind *that*, as the fundamental meaning of the great upheaval of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and should note how the outward events in which the movement took shape seem to have little or no connexion with that fundamental meaning.

The revival of learning began innocently enough. The fall of Constantinople, in 1453, sent fugitive Greek scholars seeking safety in the western countries of Europe. They brought with them manuscripts of the ancient Greek classic writers, till then unknown or only slightly known through Latin versions. The ancient thought of Greece and of Rome too was made accessible again, and scholars eagerly pursued the search. The newly invented printing press came to their aid and spread the knowledge of what was in those ancient writings. The philosophy of the Catholic Church was mainly based upon Aristotle, known

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

only in faulty Latin translations from the Arabic. Now there was disclosed the Greek original of Aristotle. And not only of Aristotle but of Plato. Here was the point at which the new learning began to spell danger for the church, which in the main saw no harm in reading the ancient literature, and through Popes and Cardinals did much to promote the study. It was as though a new world had been discovered, and it is highly significant that in another direction and in literal truth a new world *had* been discovered, by Columbus. Here was another evidence that there was more to be known and learned than till then had been dreamed of. What more likely than that the mind should grow even more restive under its old restraint, now that it saw so much that was new spread out before it? But as yet no one dared openly to defy the authority which maintained the old order, with its limitations and restraints. The man who first did that was Luther, when he burnt the Pope's Bull in 1520; and the effect of that

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

deed was out of all proportion to the immediate occasion of it, just because it meant so much more than appeared on the surface. Luther defied the Pope at the outset on the subject of indulgences, and was excommunicated as a heretic and a rebel. What he had really done was to open a breach in the barrier that for so long had hemmed in the growth of the mind. It was like the breaking of a dam that had held back the waters of a lake. Through the breach the pent up forces of the human mind which had been gathering for centuries came pouring like a flood. Luther had let loose far more than he knew, and far more than he could control. For him, and for the religious leaders of that age, it was a question of theology and ecclesiastical authority; and the main effort of the Protestant reformers was to set up the Bible in place of the Church. But Protestantism refused to conform to one type, either that of Luther or of Calvin or of anyone else. Sects and parties multiplied with bewildering rapidity, to the dismay,

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

indignation, and alarm of the original leaders. This came about because the real meaning and the real force underlying the movement was not at all what those leaders supposed it to be. It was the assertion of private judgment in religion and in many other matters as well. It was the assertion of the new found liberty of the mind to think as it would and not as it was ordered. Luther and his fellow reformers would hear nothing of private judgment, though they had claimed and acted on it for themselves. But Protestantism meant *that*, whatever else it meant ; and that mark has never wholly been lost from Protestantism in spite of all that has happened since. It is perfectly true that the authority of constraint was to a considerable extent reimposed, by setting up the Bible in place of the Church. But the mind had tasted liberty and never went so entirely into bondage again as it had been under the Catholic Church. The authority of the Bible did not reach so far as the authority of the church had done. There was far

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

more of progressive thought and action amongst peoples who had come under Protestant influence than there was amongst the Catholic nations.

Even theology, most conservative of all branches of thought, had more freedom than before. Philosophy repudiated any control of its liberty ; and Descartes and Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant have shown what unfettered freedom to think could achieve. Science also asserted its freedom, in spite of all that the hostility of the church could do. Copernicus died safely out of the way ; but he had left recorded in his book the master word of the science that was to flout the authority which had prevailed in the old order. The church silenced Galileo, but not before he had taken up the message of Copernicus, and added to it. And gradually all science has followed the lead of those pioneers, not in promoting astronomy or physics or any other particular line, but in claiming and securing entire liberty to search for truth, and find it and declare what it found. The same effect of liberating

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

the power of the mind was to be seen also in politics and the affairs of nations. In our own country, the change from the Catholic to the Protestant form of religion opened the way for the assertion of the authority of the Parliament against that of the Crown. The Civil War and the Revolution were both the result of the influence of Protestantism, but of Protestantism as a spirit of liberty much more than of Protestantism as a system of theology or a theory of church government.

So, all the way round, there was more room for the mind to exercise its natural functions than there had been under the restraints of the old order, shaped and maintained by the Catholic Church. Limitations there were, and set-backs to progress and restrictions on liberty, and Protestantism gained but a very incomplete victory. But the outstanding fact is that where Protestantism has prevailed, there is a larger, fuller, higher and deeper life of the human mind than there was or could be within the limits of the old order and under

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

the constraint of the old order. Of course I am not saying that every Protestant is a man of larger mind than any Catholic. Human nature remains much the same wherever it is found ; and in every large group of people there are saints and sinners, wise men and foolish, and many who are nothing in particular. But with the larger liberty which came through the Reformation, taken in its widest sense, there are greater opportunities for the fuller life of the mind, greater ability to use them, and more men able to rise to them. And the comparison between the nations which have come under the new order and those which have remained under the old is the proof of what I say.

If I were writing a book on a large scale, instead of what I am obliged to keep within a very narrow compass, I would expand into greater detail what I have put in so compressed a form. But the details can be found in the history books, and so far as I know there will not be found in them the statement clear and distinct of what I

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

am bringing out as the fundamental meaning of the great upheaval of the sixteenth century known as the Reformation. In a word, it was the partial liberation of the human mind, the assertion of the claim of the individual as against the institution of which he is a member or the society of which he forms a part ; it was a stage in the growth of the human mind towards the knowledge and the exercise of its responsibility, a step upward and onward towards its destiny, as being divine in its origin, and intended to grow into the likeness of him who gave it life. That is what was at the heart of the great change through which the world passed four centuries ago. That is the key to the understanding of all the endless confusion and turmoil of the time, and that was the force which worked in so many different ways to produce at first that confusion and later the new and better order in place of the old.

I pass on now to apply the lesson of that time to the understanding of our

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

own, and shall devote to that subject the remainder of this chapter.

It is no doubt true that history never repeats itself; and there are sufficient differences between our own time and the Reformation period to warn us against drawing too close a parallel. But to my mind the likeness is more striking than the differences.

During the four centuries since Luther broke the barrier and let loose the pent up forces behind it, the human mind has continued to grow, mainly by using its newly-found liberty of thought and applying it to the new opportunities which presented themselves. Great progress has been made in many departments of thought with results which have modified considerably the condition of individual social and national life. That rise to a higher plane of life made possible by the Reformation has been partially realized. But only partially; for if the barriers were broken in the sixteenth century they were not all destroyed; or perhaps more truly, the mind in its growth since those times

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

has become conscious of other barriers which at that time it did not feel. Again, therefore, there began the storing up of the mind's forces for want of an outlet, and the increasing pressure upon the barrier which kept them back. Again the signs became visible of growing unrest and discontent, of attempts to force a way through the barrier ; and the question was whether this pressure could be relieved by such means as education, gradual reform, and the like, or whether there would again be a violent disruption as in the sixteenth century.

The French Revolution was a warning and a portent, to show what was going on, what forces had been storing up and with what vehemence they were ready to break loose. That was only a partially successful effort. It was confined to one country, though its effects were felt throughout the civilized world. As a revolution it did not spread. And just as in the sixteenth century the Reformation was met by the counter Reformation on the part of the Catholic

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

Church, so the French Revolution was met by the tightening of the bonds of authority by the Governments of every other country, the repression of liberty and the growth of militarism.

But the French Revolution was significant in another way. It showed that the restraint was not of the same kind as at the Reformation, and that the direction in which the forces of the mind were seeking an outlet was different. *Then*, the need felt was for freedom to think and to speak; the ideal was to follow *truth* wherever it was to be found, to learn whatever could be learnt, to study whatever there was to study, to go exploring in every field that lay open before the awakened gaze of the mind. *Now*, the case is different. The mind has got complete liberty on its intellectual side. It can think and learn and speak upon every conceivable subject; and does so. It is not there that the pressure is felt, nor is the ideal which is sought now the ideal of Truth. The way to that is open, and will never again be closed. The ideal which has

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

been coming into view in the centuries since the Reformation, is the ideal of Justice; the barrier against which the forces of the mind are pressing is the political and social institutions which hinder justice, which set up and maintain social wrong, which tend to prevent right relations between the members of society, the citizens of a nation, the peoples of the world. For more than a century the signs have been visible, in increasing number and clearness that the pressure was increasing in the direction of social change—possibly peaceful change, possibly violent revolution. There was again felt to be an old order, with authority of constraint, in regard to the social growth of the human mind, just as there was formerly an old order, with authority of constraint, in regard to the intellectual growth of the mind. The place of heresy and schism in the former time is taken now by Socialism and the Labour movement. The heretic was a pioneer of far more and far other than the particular doctrines which he advocated. And Socialism

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

and the Labour movement have a meaning other and greater than is expressed in any programme.

The forces which press for social change, social transformation, are what have chiefly been gathering strength during these last four centuries. And during the last hundred years that pressure has become more and more evident. How long the process would have gone on I have no means of knowing. It is possible that the pressure would have been relieved by reforms of law and the power of education, using that word in its widest sense. Speculation on that point has been made useless by the war. I am not concerned at present with the causes of the war, or its horrors or its sufferings, or the guilt of those who brought it about. All that, I leave entirely out of account ; I confine myself to this one fact, that the war has done the same kind of thing that the Reformation did, only on a far more colossal scale ; it has burst and shattered the barriers which held back the pent up forces of the mind. With

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

the result that those forces are rushing out and will continue to rush out in all directions. The war itself might even be called a perverted effort of social expansion, if the aim of its authors is truly defined in the thought of Germany as the benevolent sovereign ruler of the world. The resistance to that claim was made on behalf of liberty and justice, the rights of free peoples, the protection of small nations. That ideal was not kept clear and distinct in the war, any more than the ideal of intellectual freedom was kept clear in the Reformation. In the one case as in the other the ideal was blended and covered up with all sorts of base and selfish material, and all sorts of evil results followed. But in the one case as in the other the ideal was there.

I do not press this estimate of the possible moral meaning of the war. My point is that the actual effect of the war has been to do in four years what might have taken a hundred in the slow ways of education and reform. Whether it is better so, I have no idea.

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

Certainly the cost has been appalling. The fact remains that it is so. The war has smashed the barriers beyond any possibility of repair, even if any wished to repair them. For it is not in regard to them that reconstruction is called for. Reconstruction will be the work for the liberated forces of the mind to do in following the ideal of justice, the social uplifting of human life. The breaking of the barriers has opened out possibilities in this direction which but a few years ago seemed but a vain dream. We are as yet hardly able to imagine how great an opportunity has come within the reach, even within the grasp of mankind.

The reader will remember how four centuries ago, the breaking of the barriers and the liberation of the mind from its bondage, was marked by confusion of every kind, wild ideas tending to the destruction of religion, morality, government; strifes and dissensions, sects, parties, divisions, crime and violence, rebellion and war—all of them deplorable in themselves and fruitful

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

in misery and wrong. But, in spite of all these attendant evils, the liberty was secured, the larger life of the mind was attained, and four centuries have seen the fruits of it.

The moral of which is this—the confusion of this present time, which is great and may become greater, the hardships and dangers that have to be faced, are the natural results of the upheaval which has taken place and of the forces which it has set free. There will be many wild words spoken, many violent things done; but as in the former time so in this time, the larger meaning will gradually assert itself, and the deep underlying force, like the tide of the ocean, prevail when the waves on the surface have died into silence. And then it will be seen that the new order has come in place of the old, that the life of humanity has been lifted on to a higher plane, and that as never before in the world's history has the conception been realized of a city of God wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The tedious troubled months which

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

followed the signing of the armistice after the war, saw the labours of statesmen to frame a treaty of peace ; and there are few if any who can be satisfied with that treaty as they made it. But it contains one provision which marks it off from all other treaties that have ever been signed, that shines out as a star above the storm tossed ocean of the world. It calls into being the League of Nations, no mere idea in the mind of a visionary, but a practical instrument of good, for the nations to use—if they will use it. Without that, made effective by the active co-operation and confidence of the nations, the prospect before the world would be one of certain ruin. It is the one thing which can prevent the utter downfall of all civilization as we have known it. It is the symbol and expression, as it is the first result, of that passion for social justice which is the inmost meaning and most potent force in the great cataclysm of our time.

The ideal of truth which produced the Reformation, and the ideal of

FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION

justice which is doing its work now, are both divine realities, the vision of them is man's perception of the deep things of God. The significance of ideals as necessary factors in reconstruction will be shown in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

THE line of thought followed so far at once leads to the consideration of the permanent basis of reconstruction. If there is to be any building up, there must be a solid foundation on which to build; there must be some sound principle to guide the builders, so that what they build may not fall in ruins as the old one has done. The building material is, and can only be, the broken remains of the old, for there is nothing else. So time need not be spent on that.

Reconstruction is of necessity a very practical matter, something to be done and not merely to be talked about. It is a highly important matter, also, where mistakes will have serious conse-

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

quences, and where mere leaving things alone will have still more serious consequences. There is need of all the practical men who can get things done, the statesmen, such as they are, the men with talent for organization, men of affairs and so on. They will all have plenty to do, for years to come. They will, at least it is to be hoped they will, set about putting the finances of the nation in order ; they will take education in hand, and make something more worthy the name than the half-hearted compromise which so far has been all that England has thought worth having. They will look after housing schemes ; they will take the railways in hand, and the mines ; they will wrestle with the problems of labour and capital, the relations of employer and employed, the function of the State and of Parliament as the nation's organ of expression. These and hundreds of other subjects will necessarily engage the attention, and claim the hard work of the rebuilders in this present time. All this is so obvious that I should be ashamed

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

to take up the reader's time with it, if I did not want it to lead up to something which is not so obvious, and where agreement cannot be taken for granted. Here is another very obvious fact, that all these practical men will set themselves to build up something that they consider good, if possible better than the old, certainly not worse. They will say, 'Things are in such a shocking condition that it is no use tinkering at them ; let us make a really sound piece of work while we are about it. If we do *this* and *this* and *this*, then we shall have a much better system than even we had before.' That is to say, they compare what they see, or what they remember from the old time, with the ideas they have in their minds ; and they draw plans, frame estimates, and get out specifications, consult the experts—as sensible, practical men would naturally do, for the purpose of getting into a workable shape their schemes of betterment—the schemes which so far only exist in their own minds. And if such a practical man were asked

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

in what way his plan would be better than the old way he would say: 'It would be cheaper, or more convenient, it would make it easier for some people to live, it would give opportunities to those who have not had them; it would be fairer all round. It would make more happy homes, it would divide the common burden more equally. In short it would be for the good of everybody concerned, and through them it would benefit the nation as a whole.' Some such answer as that might be fairly expected, and would, of course, meet with general assent. Doubtless there will be those who will simply look after their own profit, and care for nothing else. But these are not the reconstructors; they are the people who most of all hinder reconstruction, and they will have to be put on one side if there is to be any reconstruction at all. I leave them out of account, except as forming one main element of difficulty and even danger in the problem.

To go back to our practical men. Why should they want to work to make

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

things so that people shall have more opportunities than they had, so that the common burden shall be more equally shared, so that the arrangements of social life shall be fairer all round ; why take all this trouble to find a way that shall be for the good of all concerned, and through them for the whole nation ? Why not let everything be as it used to be ? if you can get back to that, why would not that do ? The answer, with some note of irritation in it, would be, ‘ Of course, anyone who can see a better is not going to be content with a worse. Only a fool, and a lazy one at that, would be content with the old when he could make something new and better.’ ‘ Yes, but all this is only an idea of yours, you haven’t seen it in work ; you don’t know even that it will work. ‘ Perhaps not, but I have thought it all out ; here are the plans, here are the estimates, here is the whole thing ready to be carried out. I have seen it all in my mind ; I am sure it can be done, and I am sure it ought to be done, and I am going to do my best

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

to get it done. Why, I have been thinking of this for years, and now I am going to have a try for it.'

Men like that are needed for reconstruction, and I do not doubt there are many of them and will be more. And all success to them; nay, rather, may God prosper them, as indeed they are doing his work.

Now if you talked to a practical man, such as I have tried to sketch, about ideals, the chances are that he would say: 'I have nothing to do with ideals; those are for dreamers and visionaries, men who sit apart from the hard work of the world, and see visions, and are of no use to anyone. Away with your ideals; let me get on with my work.' Then you will say to him: 'What else is it but an ideal that you are following in this work of yours? You are out to make life better for the people who have to live. You want to make things fairer all round. You want to make it so that there shall be more of peace and goodwill, more honesty, more truth, more justice, yes, and more beauty in

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

life than there used to be. And for the sake of these, which you see in mind (for they are not yet realized) you are spending your strength. You do it because you feel that it is worth a man's while to toil for such an object. You cannot sit quiet while these things are urging you to work for them. You may not call it an ideal, and may never have thought of it as such; but an ideal it is—a vision of what ought to be, which you have seen, as you look out from what *is*.'

I hope I am not assuming too much in supposing that the practical man will admit that there is more in an ideal than he thought there was, more of value and more of power. It was to disarm the hostility of the practical man towards ideals that I led up to them in the gradual way I have done. I had to get to them, for in truth ideals are the permanent basis of reconstruction, and no other will serve or will last. An ideal is what the mind can discern of eternal reality—truth, justice, beauty, love. The mind sees more or it sees

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

less of these ; but it would not see anything at all unless they were there to be seen, and unless the mind were by nature capable of beholding them. Wherever ideals are concerned, the fundamental elements in human nature are concerned also ; and that is true whether or not any religious meaning be attached to ideals. An ideal is the inward vision or perception of something higher, holier, purer, better, truer, fairer, than is at present realized in fact. It has this power, that it urges the beholder to try and realize it in fact, to work so that what he sees may be embodied in actual institutions, laws, social arrangements, or whatever else be the appropriate form. There is always this power in an ideal ; and there would be no such power, nor any power at all, if an ideal were only as practical people often say—a mere dream, the idle fancy of an idle mind.

An ideal is the connecting link (or one of them) between the things seen and temporal and the things unseen and eternal. At the one end there is the

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

eternal reality—divine truth, right, beauty, or love—which is seen, and the vision of which is the ideal. At the other end are all the outward forms in which it finds expression. Thus, the ideal of right finds expression in just laws, honest dealings, the protection of the weak, the repression of crime, the liberty of the subject, freedom of speech and so on; and more particularly, in such forms as taxes fairly adjusted to the power to pay them, wages apportioned not merely to the law of supply and demand but to the right of the wage earner to the opportunity of living the life of a man and not of a mere industrial hireling, of no importance except as a factor in his industry. The ideal of truth finds its expression in the widening of knowledge, the advancement of science, the progress of education, the exposure of superstitions, the removal of prejudices, the putting of reason in place of passion. To denounce secret diplomacy and secret treaties is to give very definite expression to the ideal of truth; and

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

to protest against the muzzling of the Press, in order that facts may be concealed when it is inconvenient that they should be known, is another service to that same ideal of truth. The ideal of beauty finds expression, more or less, in all works of art—music, poetry, painting, and so on; and is served by every effort to make the scene and setting of life more beautiful. Town planning is an extremely practical operation; but as the term is understood now it is a direct attempt to give expression in visible form to the ideal of beauty, in a region of life where hitherto no ideal was considered or recognized at all. And the ideal of love finds expression in everything which promotes peace and goodwill amongst human beings, in every effort of sympathy, the work of every charity, every hospital, every provision for the weak and the poor and the helpless. And greatest of all, in the attempt of which the League of Nations is the outcome and the symbol, to make an end of war, and to establish the appeal to

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

reason in the place of the appeal to force as the means of deciding between nation and nation. Some say of the League of Nations, that it is only an ideal, meaning that it is therefore not fit for a hard, practical world. Certainly it is an ideal, and just for that very reason it *is* fit for a hard, practical world ; and, again for that very reason, those who advocate it are determined that it shall be made effective in this hard, practical world. Let Lord Robert Cecil say if it is not an ideal, a heavenly vision to be realized on earth, and if it is not the constraining power of that ideal which makes him—as truly as it made Paul—‘not disobedient to the heavenly vision.’ The statesman of to-day is doing as great a work for mankind as the apostle of old ; and if the one built up the Church, the other is building up the Kingdom of God upon earth. Which, indeed, is a greater thing.

The great ideals are few—being those of Truth, Right, Beauty and Love. But the forms in which they find expression

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

are infinitely varied, as I have tried to suggest. Ideals might be compared to the ladder in Jacob's dream, which was planted upon the earth, but the top reached unto heaven. The outward form in which the ideal finds expression is amongst the practical facts of everyday life, plans for reform, schemes of betterment and the like. The inner meaning is found in the unseen and eternal reality, perceived clearly or dimly or even not consciously perceived at all.

If then there is need in abundance of the practical men who will work out the details of reconstruction, thus taking up the ideal at one end, there is no less need of those who take up the ideal at the other end, and keep clearly in view the divine reality which is implied in it. For it is these especially who feel the constraining and driving power of the ideal, that which makes them its messengers and revealers to their fellow men—often so slow of heart to believe, so hard to persuade, so unwilling to follow.

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

These are they who are called dreamers and visionaries, unpractical, impossible. Yet it is always these who have set the practical men to work. Every reform, great or small, has been the carrying out in action by practical men of what in the beginning was the dream of a visionary, laughed at for his folly or assailed as a mischievous fire-brand. What was once the vision of some lonely prophet crying in the wilderness, is seen by a few and then by many, and at last by a sufficient number to realize it in action and set it to work. The practical men may truly say it was they who did it; but if it had not been for the prophet and his vision they would never have done it. It was an ideal that stopped the Slave Trade. It is an ideal that has stopped or is stopping the Drink Trade in America. And in that respect both prophet and practical man have achieved more in America than they have here. But if the day comes when our nation also puts its foot down on the Drink Trade that also will be due to an

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

ideal, seen by its prophets and carried out at last by its practical men. It was an ideal which brought about the Reform of Parliament in 1832, an ideal which has by no means spent its force yet. It was an ideal which planted schools up and down the land, and colleges and universities ; yes, and Sunday schools, too, and provided that no one should grow up wholly untaught. All this was done by practical men ; but they were led on thereto by those who beheld the ideal and felt its power. And without going further into particular cases, it is much to the point to recall how the Reformation was mainly brought about by the pressure of an ideal—the ideal of truth ; and how the upheaval of our own time is mainly due to the pressure of another ideal, that of Right. As in the one case, so in the other, it was the prophets, the men of deepest and clearest vision who saw most of the divine reality behind the outward confusion, even though there may have been none at the time who read the full meaning of what

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

was coming to pass. And as in the one case, so in the other, it was and it will be the practical men who give expression in actual fact to the ideal, who carry out in its manifold details the work of Reconstruction.

So I say that the permanent basis of reconstruction is and can only be the ideals such as I have described them. In other words, no reconstruction will be of any value, or have any stability unless it is in some degree—and the more the better—the expression of an ideal, unless it reckons with the eternal reality implied in it, and the force exerted by that reality. Whatever new institutions are set up, whatever new social organization is devised, great or small, must be such as will carry out in practice one or other ideal ; so far as it fails to do this it will break down.

It is no use saying that self-interest is a stronger power than any ideal can exert, and that however we may talk about ideals self-interest will be the real controlling force.

I do not doubt that self-interest will

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

do its utmost to gain and to keep the master in whatever changes are made, and at the onset it may win many victories. But there is no permanence in anything that self-interest can do. We are out to build up a new order because the old order has been broken to pieces. And why was the old order broken to pieces? Simply because it could not stand against the pressure of the ideal gradually stored up and exerted against it. Why did the Reformation break up what was in its time the old order? Because that old order rested on self-interest, vested interests, ancient institutions, creeds and doctrines handed down by tradition and maintained for the sake of their inherited sanctity, the power and prestige of the undivided Church, the proud claim of divine authority over the minds and consciences of mankind.

I say nothing of the moral corruption of the unreformed Church, though that was enough to discredit its claim to sovereign authority, let alone to the reverence of its subjects. The real

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

point is that the old order, of which the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages was the chief instrument and expression, had come to be a mere hard shell of antiquity venerated because of its age and history, a great organization all of whose official servants were interested in keeping it up. Within that order along with saintly piety there was shelter for ignorance, prejudice, superstition, indolence, fear, doubt, vice and corruption, every element in human nature which is most averse from change, and keeps up the old because it hates the new. That was the old order, and it fell because it had lost the power to discern any ideal and had no thought of adjusting itself to any ideal. The power of the ideal broke it and laid it in ruins. In our own time it has been somewhat the same; the old order has been broken, and the war did but give the final blow to what would have gone to pieces without the war. The ideal in this case is the ideal of justice; and the old order has gone down by reason of its failure to conform to the ideal of

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

justice. I am not saying that the old order was wholly bad, but that there was in it enough of injustice, of class division, of unfair privilege and undeserved privation, to ensure its downfall. And if reconstruction is attempted on the old basis which allowed and fostered self-interest in any of its forms, then the same result will follow again, and whatever new order is built on that basis will go to pieces as the old one has done; and all the energy spent on reconstruction will have been wasted, and all its fairest hopes blighted, simply because those to whom the opportunity was given were too blind or too timid or too faithless to rise to it. The people of this generation have their choice to make, they can please themselves; they can build the new order on the firm rock of the eternal reality, by following the lead of the ideals which they see; or they can build it on the shifting sands of the false, the mean, and the selfish in human nature. It was said of old that 'where there is no vision the people perish,' which means

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

that where no ideal is seen and owned and followed, there is nothing that makes a people—only a collection of human beings, with nothing to distinguish them from the animals except the powers they wasted and the opportunities they refused. So it is when ‘there is no vision, the people perish.’ But so also it is when the vision is there and the people pay no heed to it, call it a foolish dream, well enough to look at but never to take seriously. In that case also, the people perish; and their fall is the greater because they have seen the better and chosen the worse. It is true of nations no less than of individuals, that ‘God is not mocked, but whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap’; and in the choice that is made in this present time, the steps that are taken to build up the new order the nation is preparing its future fate, either to go forward to heights of noble achievement until now impossible, or to fall, broken and disgraced, its vision gone, itself perishing.

I believe this to be the strict hard

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

truth of the situation of the present time. It is not flowery figure of speech to say that ideals are visions of eternal reality, it is simple fact ; and the whole history of human experience in the past confirms the truth of it, and bears witness to the power which the ideal exerts in and through the minds of those who behold it. Therefore it is that the ideal is the only permanent basis for reconstruction, if that which is to be built is to have any power of endurance.

And in these times when the old order is broken down, the call of the ideal is heard on every side, in many voices it is true, and in tones which have a wide range of volume and significance ; but all together sound the call of the ideal, the call to mankind, to this nation, to every one of its members to go forward, to rise, and help others to rise, to a higher and better life than the old. Let them listen for that call of the ideal, in every proposal that is made by way of reconstruction ; let them try it by the test of whether it is in accordance with right, and truth and beauty and

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

love, whether it tends to raise the standard of life on the moral and intellectual and not merely on the material side. Is it going to throw privilege and power into the hands of a few, and shut the rest out, or is it going to give to all a fairer chance to live a fuller life? Is it going to hinder or to help men and women in attaining to the nobler things of life? Is it going to set free the powers in human minds which have lain useless because they could find no outlet? Or is it going to keep them still bound and useless, of no avail either for the individual or the general good? Is it going to breed class selfishness and class hatred, or is it going to help people to take each other for the good that is in them, without distinction of class? Is it going to secure a more even justice for all, or is it merely a new injustice under the plea of removing an old wrong?

These and their like are the questions which need to be asked in regard to every scheme of reconstruction. And they must be answered by each one

BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

according to his own judgment. And, of course, many other things must be considered in every case, as to the practical means of securing the object aimed at. With all this I have no present concern, not because they are unimportant, and not because I have no opinion on this subject, but because it is not for me to say how any individual ought to judge in any given case. I am only trying to make clear and to lay stress upon what holds good in every case, and offering what help I can in distinguishing that which is of most vital importance. I have maintained throughout that ideals are the only sound basis for reconstruction, and I have done my best to show the practical side of an ideal and not merely its visionary side. All that can be said against ideals is justified if they evaporate in mere words, and serve as an excuse for inaction. It *is* no use to talk fine things about the new world and the kingdom of heaven so long as there is no attempt to get to grips with the task immediately in front, begin clearing

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

away the actual obstacles in the way, do some real solid work of any kind that needs to be done. That is the kind of thing which brings ideals into contempt and disrepute; but the ideal remains a divine reality, the fault is in the man who betrays it, honouring it by mere lip-service, while his heart and his will are far from it.

But for the brave and true who will serve God and their fellow men the ideal is their guide and their inspiration, their guide to wise action in the darkness and confusion of the time and their inspiration of courage and hope to meet its difficulties and bear its disappointment. And being, as I have said again and again, their vision of divine reality, what is that but that they have and know they have God himself with them in all that they do—his might to lean on, his wisdom to guide them and his love to cheer them as they go forward ?

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

IN the preceding pages, Reconstruction has formed the main subject; and although Religion has certainly not been absent or neglected, yet it has not been explicitly dealt with. In this chapter I shall make religion my chief subject, and shall be able to use what I have so far said about reconstruction, in order to show how religion and reconstruction are related together. I mean by religion the consciousness of our relation to God, and the thoughts, feelings and acts which arise therefrom. The relation is one of dependence, as of the lower upon the higher; of trust and love towards one who is perfectly wise, holy and good. Worship is the act of the soul turning towards God, and the

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

articulate expression of it is prayer and praise. But while worship is, if I may put it so, religion focused into specific acts at definite times, religion is diffused through the whole of life. It is religion whereby we trace the Creator's power and wisdom in the wonder and grandeur and beauty of the world in which we live, and as Kepler said, think his thoughts after him. It is religion, when we regard the doing of every duty as a service of him, and when we love him by loving our fellow men. Religion brings into relation with God all of life except its evil, the selfishness in human hearts, and the sin which is selfishness in act. I would not be misunderstood in this. I am not setting up a power of evil as against the goodness of God. I am not saying anything at all now about the origin of evil. I am simply saying that when we look out upon life as we see it and meet with its various experiences, and when we bring what we see into relation with God, then that is religion. If we try to understand in some degree the meaning of what we

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

see—the origin of created things, the relation of mind to matter, the problem of evil, the freedom of the will, and many such questions—that is philosophy. And with philosophy I have no present concern.

Religion such as I have indicated it, is what underlies all the differences of creed and sect and church, what alone gives meaning to those differences and such worth as they may possess. Religion is never rightly identified with any one form of creed or sect or church to the exclusion of all others. The adherents of some one form, the members of some one church, may think that their form is the truest, their church the best. And perhaps they may be right; but none the less the religion which finds expression in their form and their church finds it in all the other churches as well. Not all the churches together contain all the religion there is; and there is that in religion which slips past all the creeds and lives unfettered in many a soul that knows God.

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

When therefore I speak of religion in its relation to reconstruction, what I say (if it be true at all) applies to religion wherever it is to be found, not alone amongst Christians but in all of every nation who worship God and serve him. And the only point where differences of creed and sect and church come in at all, is when the question is asked : How can the influence of religion be made most effective, how can it have the fullest scope for doing what it alone is capable of doing ? That point I shall come to later on. The immediate question is, what has religion, as I have described it, to do with reconstruction, what part can it play, what difference will it make, according as it be present or absent, active or idle ? How can it help reconstruction by securing for it results otherwise unobtainable ?

I was careful to include the remark made above about sectarian differences, because I wanted to guard against the kind of objection which would rule out Religion from Reconstruction alto-

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

gether, on the ground that religious dissension is fatal to every good cause, and that reconstruction being a practical matter ought to be kept free from the interference of those who go by creeds and churches. The answer to that is that it is not religion which has done the harm, but those who have identified religion with their own creed and church and who cannot find it, or will not acknowledge it, in any other. The religion I speak of, and whose relation to reconstruction I have to show, is independent of them all, behind them all, beneath them all, greater than them all. Therein lies its power, for therein it has most of what is divine and least of what is merely human.

Nevertheless, religion is both divine and human; because its source and object is God, and it lives and works in human souls. Therefore it acts in two directions—towards God and towards man. These two directions serve to show what are its two main functions in regard to reconstruction. (I say nothing of religion in regard to any-

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

thing else, because that lies out of the field of our present inquiry.)

The two main functions of religion in regard to reconstruction are accordingly these :—First, religion keeps open the way of communication between God and the soul, and more particularly it shows the divine meaning of those ideals upon which reconstruction depends. And second, religion uplifts and purifies the mind and character of those who share in the work of reconstruction, or who are subject to its results. In other words, those who build up and those who are to dwell in the new order which shall be. After I have explained as well as I can these two main functions of religion in regard to reconstruction, I shall take up the question I mentioned just now, namely, how can religion find fullest scope for doing its proper work in this direction ; and under these three main heads I shall arrange what I want to say in the present chapter.

First, religion keeps open the way of communion between God and the soul ; and more particularly it shows the

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

divine meaning of the great ideals upon which reconstruction depends.

God is the giver of our life, the enlightener of our minds, the judge of our actions, the object of our reverence and love. He is the supreme perfection to which, or to whom, we look up; the Lord Almighty, the Creator, the Sovereign Ruler, the Father in Heaven. These terms indicate the various relations in which we stand towards him. We are subject to his power, we are responsible to his justice, we are the children of his love. We live in his sight, and within the range of his will and power. 'In him we live and move and have our being.' Our lives may be never so poor and faulty and imperfect, yet if religion be there, we can still look up to God and lean on his strength, be guided by his wisdom, and trust his goodness. All the highest elements in our nature find expression on the side nearest to God, and are quickened and strengthened by his influence. And while it is true, and necessarily true, that we cannot be always thinking of

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

him, still less be always conscious of his presence, none the less we know, when we do think about him that he is always there, and that we stand in those various relations to him. Wherever we are and whatever we do, there is always that other than ourselves, who holds us in life. In serving him, obeying his will, loving and trusting him, we rise to our highest and best—even though that be not much. That is what his children have tried to do, ever since they learned to call him their Father in Heaven ; and they believe that he does not despair of them, they know that he helps them ; their trust in him has never been put to confusion. Whatever they may be to him, he is all in all to them.

Between him and them there is communication. They are not left so to speak face to face with each across some wide gulf that neither can pass. Prayer is the soul's utterance to him ; and in silent blessing, not in spoken words, his answer comes. His influence makes itself felt in the awakening of the noblest powers of the soul ; and we

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

speaking truly when we say that he guides and helps, and encourages, that he pities and pardons and loves. All this belongs to the general experience of those in whom religion is active.

Now if religion were absent, from whatever cause, then our whole position in and outlook upon life would be changed; and changed in this way, that we should no longer stand in a relation with one on whom we depend and to whom we look up, but that other one in the relation would be gone. We, or rather let us say, human beings in general, would be left with none higher than themselves, none greater, wiser, holier, than the greatest wisest and holiest of their fellows. Some have thought it better so, and have been content and even glad to feel that there is none above them, have felt no need of a strength greater than their own, no longing to pray to the unseen friend who will hear, no quiet joy in the divine companionship. If they can live nobler and better lives so, it is for them to decide their beliefs for themselves. Cer-

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

tainly it is not for me to judge them. But the fact remains, that one's whole attitude towards life, its facts and its possibilities, its experiences, its hopes and its aspirations, is widely different, according as God is owned and revered, or is left out. There is present in the one case and absent in the other, the trust that God keeps control of this world and what happens there, that he makes his influence felt in its events, that the doings of man upon earth are not an affair of fickle chance or blind fate, and that under whatever veil of contradiction or temporary triumph of evil, there is good at the heart of all, and a righteous will ordering the whole. Surely the presence or absence of that great foundation of trust, makes a tremendous difference. And if it be absent, nothing can make up for the want of it. Men may say that they can get on very well without it; but no man has ever yet discovered or invented a substitute for God that could do what the real God does, and what he really does.

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

This could be shown in regard to every phase of religion, and if my present subject were religion in general, I would go on to show it. But I am concerned with religion as it affects reconstruction, and I will show it there.

In the last chapter I said much about ideals, and maintained that ideals were the permanent basis of reconstruction, because they were the divine realities seen more or less clearly in the inward vision of the soul. Truth, Right, Beauty, and Love are the great realities known and discerned by the human mind. In so far as they are seen, their power is felt, as an inward constraint impelling us to realize them in act, live in accordance with them, and bring about such a condition of human social life as shall give expression to them. And I showed how the power of ideals really had brought about the great upward movements in history.

Now see how it is with an ideal, and especially the power of it, if there be, or if there be not, religion in the mind of him who beholds it. If religion be

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

there, then the beholder associates the ideal with God. What he sees is not only a reality but a divine reality. It is part of the very nature of God, eternal as he is, no mere dream of the imagination, no flight of fancy with nothing behind it, like a rainbow seen on the dark cloud, where the glowing colours vanish as the storm sweeps over and drenches the beholder. If the ideal is like anything created, it is like the sun which shines and shines though the clouds obscure his light, and gives the token of his presence even when the storm is heaviest, by tracing the radiant arch against the cloud.

He who beholds an ideal, sees in it an aspect of the nature of God. Truth is that which *is* because God has ordered it so and not otherwise. The vision of truth is a perception of the eternal order. Right is the direction of the divine will, and the ideal of right is the discerning of that will in the choice between good and evil. Beauty is the radiance which shines in every work of God, his free gift of blessing beyond

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

what is needful for the purpose of his works. And the ideal of beauty is seen in every vision of a world or a life made fairer, purer and holier. Love is the very heart of God, the highest that he has revealed of himself. And the ideal of love is the vision of the perfect life and the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

We have our ideals, and it may be that we do not always see in them what I have tried to suggest. Perhaps not ; but there is nothing to come in the way of our upward vision except our own dim and clouded mind. We trust where we cannot see, and in faith look up to those serene and glorious heights, knowing that they are there. But how is it if there be no religion ? Ideals there may be ; for it is not left to men of religion only to reverence Truth and Right and Beauty and Love. But who is to say that they have any reality about them ; still less an eternal reality ; still less a divine reality ? Pilate asked ' What is Truth ? ' and he was a man in whom religion was not conspicuous.

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

And many a Roman in those days, far nobler than he, revered truth and right, marvelled at beauty, and had some perception of love, yet could not tell whence they came, nor what they meant. And few indeed were they in those days who ever felt the power of such ideal as they saw. Seneca saw it, in the midst of the vilest corruption of the Roman Court ; but he was no prophet to rebuke and shame that corruption. Epictetus saw it, slave and philosopher, and he felt its power ; but men heard him and turned away. Marcus Aurelius saw it, from his lonely and unhappy throne ; but the sight brought him neither help nor cheer. And of the others beside these few, who were there that saw or cared ? that traced their dim vision of Truth and Right to any divine source ? The Stoics ? Yes, and a noble lesson they taught. But the Stoics never felt the constraining power of the ideal which they beheld. Their philosophy did for them what it could ; but it could not bring to them the power of the living

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

God in and through their ideal. Religion alone can do that, the sense of communion with God, of trust in him and life in him. All that is wanting if religion be wanting. And when I say that ideals are the only permanent basis for reconstruction, then the connexion of religion with reconstruction is that religion shows the divine reality of what we build on, and brings the thought of the power of God, and the actual fact of the power of God, to help in the building. It is his work that is done, and he that is with them who do his work, to encourage and inspire, to guide and to uphold. 'Unless the Lord build the city they labour in vain that build it.'

That then is one function of religion in regard to reconstruction. It keeps open the way of communion with God, shows the divine meaning of the ideals which we behold, and it brings with it the power and inspiration of God.

The other function of religion in regard to reconstruction is on the human side, not in our upward vision towards

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

God, but in its influence upon our own mind and character. Religion refreshes the springs of thought and feeling and action in us, purifies and uplifts, and revives all that is best in us. No one needs to be told, for he knows it by his own experience, how the higher elements in our nature tend to be parched and choked by the daily pressure of the common life, soiled by the grime and dust of the world. It is religion, the influence of God upon us, when we seek him and wait upon him, that saves us from the deadening power of what we call the world. It is that influence which keeps alive unselfish love in us, the sympathy and kind affections, the faith in goodness and truth, and all the plain simple and substantial virtues. Social life, whether in a family, a city or a nation, is only possible by reason of sympathy, goodwill, mutual trust, and unselfish desire for the good of others. Selfishness, however it show itself, is the chief disruptive force. And if it be said that selfishness in one form or another is the

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

most powerful factor in social life as it has been known hitherto, the answer is that if that were so there would not be any social life at all ; and that because there is as much selfishness as in fact there is, social life has been hitherto so very far from what it ought to be.

Most of the troubles and the disasters which have made reconstruction an urgent necessity have sprung from selfishness in one way or another, breeding suspicion, ill will, covetousness, and all the evils whose results we see in the world to-day. If reconstruction is to be worth anything, those who set out to build the new order must take heed to these things. If they say, human nature cannot be changed, they may as well give up the attempt at reconstruction altogether. In a sense, which is not relevant, it is true that human nature cannot be changed. It is as God made it. But then God made it with the power to grow, either better or worse ; the power to overcome its own faults, rise above its own defects, increase on the side of its nobler ele-

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

ments, and conquer the baser ones. Change is possible. Selfishness is not enthroned, supreme in power, which cannot be challenged ; and the influence of God in human hearts, which religion brings with it, drives out the selfishness which lurks there. In the mind where God is constantly owned and adored, and his influence felt and yielded to, there is no place for selfishness.

Therefore religion is of vital importance for reconstruction if the new order to be built up is to have any more stability and worth than the old. Let no one imagine that reconstruction is only an affair of organization, institutions, new forms of management, committees, boards, agencies, or schemes for financial reform, or Education Acts, or the like. These things are necessary no doubt, and will be forthcoming, as they are the easiest results to produce. But the real heart of the problem of reconstruction is to strengthen the nobler elements in human nature, so that there shall be a nobler race to dwell in the new social order. It is

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

to deepen the springs of trust in goodness and right, to strengthen the power of sympathy and goodwill and brotherly love, so that people shall not merely talk about the Brotherhood, but shall mean it and act upon it. Religion can help them to do that as nothing else can, and without religion the most promising scheme for reconstruction will come to naught. And there is this difference between the one type of reconstruction and the other, between reconstruction by organization and reconstruction by change of character. In the former case, there is not much that we as individuals can directly do. We can work for this or that reform, we can approve or disapprove Acts of Parliament, and wherever we have a vote we can use it as a matter of conscience, a trust for the welfare of our fellow citizens, and not for any selfish interest of our own.

But in the latter case, we can begin straightaway, and begin with ourselves. I do not mean just those who may read these pages, but every one

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

in this nation—or every nation—who really desires to help in reconstruction. And the first beginning is to get rid of the war spirit in every one of its evil forms. We need to get out of our hearts all hatred of the conquered nations, and put goodwill in its place. We need to remember the sorrow and suffering of their millions of people, and not to keep on thinking of their sins. We need to build up friendship with them, however hard it may be, and it is hard. We have got to put out of our mind the thought that all the sins were on one side. God only knows the real truth of that, and we are not serving him if we take on ourselves to do his work. ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ saith the Lord.

We need to learn to think of our fellow men, in this country and other countries, otherwise than we have done, with the real desire to understand what underlies the sharp conflicts of opinion and action; and, with the insight of sympathy and imagination, to see how life looks under conditions than those

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

of our own lives. We need to realize far more than we have done, how our fellow men are really our brothers in the sight of God, and not to regard them merely as employés in an industry, or employers either, or as mere embodiments of labour and capital, whose whole concern is wages and whose mental horizon is bounded by the thought of the nationalization of this or that. There may be differences of working, but there is the same spirit in all; and we have not made a beginning of reconstruction in the only true sense till we have set ourselves to learn to recognize that one spirit in all the different working—as some one said—‘till we learn to see the face of Christ in the face of the common man.’ We talk of the League of Nations, and we say truly that therein lies the great hope for the future of the human race. So it does. But the League of Nations will be a failure if the people in the several nations remain at heart unchanged, if they are content with a constitution drafted on paper and signed

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

by statesmen and even ratified by Parliaments. It is a great venture of faith, an appeal to the unselfish element in humanity ; and if the several members of the nation do not respond to that appeal make that venture rise above prejudice and suspicion and jealousy and sluggish indifference, then the League of Nations will fail, and its failure will be the shame and the doom of this generation.

Therefore I say that the reconstruction which is most of all needed is in the hearts and minds and characters and tempers of every member of every nation ; and the help of religion is of vital importance for *that*, as it brings in all the inspiration and help of God, who ‘alone can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men.’

Those then are the two main functions of religion in relation to reconstruction. And I pass to the third point which in this chapter I desire to make.

If religion be thus of vital importance then it follows that the power of religion should have its fullest and freest scope

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

to make its influence felt and to do its work. Wherever religion is active in any human soul, it ought to be able to help in the common cause; the forces of religion ought to be able to act together, and with their full strength. Do we see that, or anything like that, in actual fact? Is it not the grief of some and the shame of all the churches that the forces of religion are divided up and kept apart, their energies wasted upon trying to do piecemeal what they ought to be doing together? Is it wonderful that so large a proportion of the nation has turned away from organized religion altogether and cares nothing whatever for the churches, what they may do or what they may say, and not much for what they may give? I know that there is religion in all the churches, lives of saintly piety and devoted service of God amongst their members. But how much is there of real sharing in a common religion amongst the different churches, and sects and denominations? Does the Protestant work in the furtherance of

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

religion with the Roman Catholic, or the Nonconformist with the Churchman, or any of them with the Unitarian, or any Christian with the Jew ? Yet all have religion, all worship God, and according to their light and their power they serve him.

The root cause of all this is in identifying religion with a creed—any creed—i.e., making doctrinal belief a test of membership of a particular religious body. That may have served a useful purpose when there was need to build up the one church as a stronghold of defence a place of refuge in the early centuries ; but it serves no useful purpose now. And the history of the church from the beginning ; and of the churches in later days, has been (with all its good) the history of heresies, divisions, factions, jealousies, strife, wrath, persecutions, revilings, hatred, bitterness, distrust and ill will, expressed according to the fashion of the time. Fire and faggots are not used now ; but the temper and frame of mind which once made the use of them possible, is

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

present still. And what keeps it alive, and with it the whole array of sectarian divisions, is the idea of doctrinal conformity to some particular creed as the test of membership in that particular church. Nay, rather it is the very idea of the church at all, which is at the bottom of the disunion of the forces of religion. A church as a place of worship where those who are in sympathy with each other can meet for worship is one thing, and nothing but good can ever come of such meeting, as the need for it will never die out. But a church, meaning a group of people not merely agreeing in a common creed, but drawing a sharp line of division between themselves and all others who do not profess the same creed—that is a very different thing. The effect is harmful to religion wherever there is that division, and it is greatest where the church is organized on the largest scale. It is perfectly futile to talk about the union of the churches so long as they insist on the acceptance of their creeds as a test of membership and co-operation. Men

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

will never believe all alike, and it is labour in vain to make them try. Meanwhile, those who should be working together are kept apart, or stand aloof from each other, and the work of religion is not done ; even in this present time when it most needs to be done. I have no doubt in my own mind as to what is the remedy and the only remedy for all this ancient and deep-rooted mischief. But I do not expect to live to see it adopted. The remedy is simply to drop the doctrinal test of membership in all the churches ; let people associate together for worship and work as they feel inclined, and let them recognize fully and frankly and without reserve that in religion they are all one fellowship though they think and believe and serve God in different ways.

For my own part I would abandon the church idea as one that has outlived its truth and its usefulness, and seek for some other to include all in whom religion is active.

If the doctrinal tests were abandoned then religion would come to its own, and

RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION

gain the power it ought to have, and never has had, as a redeeming force in human lives the means of overcoming the evil of the world by the power of God. Thus only will religion be set free for its proper work; and if that work is to be done in reconstruction, the building up of the new order, then those who are the professing representatives of religion will have to put their own houses in order. They, more than any other, have the means of bringing religion to bear upon the pressing needs of this time. And they more than any other seem but as blind leaders of the blind, as the prophet said groping for the wall at noonday. If they desire to help in reconstruction it is here that they need to begin, with what would be reconstruction in every sense of the term.

I will say no more now on the subject of religion in relation to reconstruction. In the concluding chapter I shall follow this line of thought somewhat further, and show, as I hope, a more excellent way by which to release all the power of religion for the work of God.

CHAPTER V

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

IN the present chapter, I shall notice some of the difficulties which will have to be faced, some of the burdens which will have to be borne, if that is to be reached which we desire to reach, if that new order is to be built up for whose establishment we hope and pray and mean to work.

I have held up that prospect as the fulfilment of ideals, the realizing of a heavenly vision, or if you will the overcoming of the manifold evil of the old order with the good of the new, by the help of God who inspires all ideals, and who gives strength and hope and courage and cheer to those who work for him. All that is true and remains true, and will remain true whatever

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

happens. But we should greatly delude ourselves if we thought that what we behold in our vision of the future is going to come to pass of itself, without an effort on our part. There is a price to be paid for it ; and a heavy price ; if it is not paid, the new order will not come into being. I doubt not, every one of those who desire to build up the new order is willing to work for it, and expects to work for it. But it is not only a matter of working ; and what else it is, I will try to show. We need to realize clearly that in this matter of Reconstruction we are up against a big thing ; and that if we mean to serve the Lord in it we shall not do so by offering him that which shall cost us nothing.

I said in the second chapter, that the war had done in four years what might have taken a hundred, in that it had broken down the barriers which hindered the growth of the mind, especially in regard to the ideal of Justice. If this be a true interpretation of what has happened, then the war, in spite of all

its horror and the misery which it has produced, is the first stage in the change from the old order to the new. It has intensified the need for reconstruction, but that need was present before the war. And, as the need for reconstruction has been intensified, so the possibility of it has been enormously increased, by the very violence of the destruction which the war has wrought. Yet if the result is to be for the final good of mankind (and I do not doubt that it will be) surely there was never a more awful road by which good could come to the world. It is the blessing of God which comes and will come ; it is the sin of man, his selfishness, his every kind of imperfection, which made it so that God's angel could only march forward through blood and tears.

The sorrow and suffering which the war has brought, are therefore part of the price of reconstruction. If that is to be accomplished, then it will have been made possible through the self-sacrifice of those who gave their lives in the war, those who have returned

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

shattered and maimed, those who have borne its agony and faced its horrors, all who in whatsoever way have suffered for the sake of the great cause in which they fought. The loss of all those lives is part of the price of reconstruction. They have given everything for which they might have hoped, if they had lived. They accepted death when their time came. They fought the good fight; they endured to the end—the swift and terrible end. They died that we might live.

Countless memorials have been erected in this country and in wellnigh every other country in the world, to those who have so nobly died.

Every such memorial is a symbol of sorrow, which even so is but partially expressed. And every such memorial would be but a mockery if those who erected it did not resolve in their hearts that such sacrifice should not be in vain. Those young men have died, and died that we may live. It is for all who mourn for them, so to live that they shall not have died in vain, and to

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

give their lives, though in other forms of service, that the new order for which they died, shall be worthy even of that supreme sacrifice. And if ever we grow careless and languid, or lose heart and hope and think that we labour in vain, then most of all 'we will remember them'; they call to us out of the silence 'We died for you. Will ye not do your part? What, could ye not watch with us one hour?' If the time should ever come when we are deaf to the appeal of the glorious and heroic dead, then indeed their memory would be our shame, and we false to the trust they left to us.

In that mournful and splendid memory, the sorrow of the war rises to its supreme height. Yet it is but the highest peak of a stupendous mountain of sorrow and suffering, utterly beyond the power of imagination to realize. It is sorrow in millions and millions of lives; and not only sorrow but material hardship—starvation, disease, misery—to an extent never before known in the world. All that is the burden

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

which the world bears to-day ; bears, because there is no escape from bearing it ; bears with patience and trust in God, or with fierce rebellion, or with silent despair, but bears, or dies under the burden. All that is part of the price of reconstruction. An awful price. Who would dare say in face of these things ‘reconstruction is good ; and if that be the price, we will pay the price’ ? Who would not have wished to bear all the evils and wrongs of the old order, rather than let loose all *that*, in order to bring the new ? Who, indeed, if the choice had been left to him ? But the choice was not so left. The war has come and has gone, leaving all this behind it. There is the burden laid upon us all ; and there is no escape from bearing it. But there also lies the way from the old order to the new ; from darkness into light.

In speaking of the Price of Reconstruction, I could not leave out the self-sacrifice of the dead and the endurance of the living shown in immediate connexion with the war. But as recon-

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

struction is naturally regarded as coming after the war, so the price of reconstruction consists chiefly in what we shall be called upon to offer, in various ways, in the time to come. Let me put aside before I go further, the idea that the price of reconstruction is the amount of taxation which we shall have to pay, either in order to recover the financial stability of the country or to provide the funds for the various schemes of reform which will form part of the general plan of reconstruction. Certainly sound finance is one of the elementary necessities of the nation. But even when the time comes, as it will come, for the financial needs of the nation to be met by the methods of common honesty and plain hard work, I do not include what we may have to pay then by way of taxes, in that which is the real price of reconstruction. Partly because we should have to pay then whether reconstruction followed or not. I am thinking of other kinds of sacrifice which we shall have to make, if reconstruction is to follow ; things

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

that we shall have to do, and also to bear, if we mean that so far as in us lies the hope for the new order shall not be frustrated. Sacrifice indeed is the keynote of the whole ; sacrifice no less real, though expressed in a different way, than the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in the war. And it is chiefly some of the forms of sacrifice which we shall be called upon to make, or which we can of our own will offer, that I wish to consider at present.

We are out for reconstruction, for the building up of the new upon the ruins of the old, we are out to make the crooked straight and the rough places plain. Very crooked they are, and very rough, and the task of making them what they are to be in the new order will be hard and long.

When we hear or read about making the crooked straight, it has perhaps never occurred to us to look at the matter from the point of view of the crooked thing which is to be made straight and the rough place that is to be made plain ? Imagine, for a moment,

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

that 'every valley' which was 'to be exalted,' had a voice and could say how it thought of what was to be done to it. Would it welcome the news that it was to be filled up, its banks where the wild roses grew made level with the surrounding plain, the stream that flowed along it stopped up or sent some other way, its beauty destroyed, its trees and flowers buried under a great heap of earth, all its shady nooks and shelters blotted out of sight? Whatever the valley might think about it, those who had loved to wander through it would feel grieved and sore at the announcement that it must now be filled up, even though it were done to 'prepare the way of the Lord.' So of the mountain and hill that should be made low for the like purpose. And the crooked that was to be made straight could hardly welcome the process that should forcibly alter it from what it had been before, crush it into new forms, cramp or stretch it as the need might be, to suit some purpose quite other than its own comfort or convenience. However good

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

that purpose may be, and however great the blessing to be obtained through making the crooked straight, it cannot be attained except at the cost of whatever inconvenience, hardship, privation, suffering, loss may be needful to make the crooked straight. It may be, and the whole problem of reconstruction proceeds on the assumption that it will be, better even for the crooked itself that it should be made straight, but it will not like the process ; and either it will resist as far as it can, or will make a hard sacrifice for the sake of the end in view. Nothing except that end in view, the blessing that is to come, the new order that is to be, could justify the making of the crooked straight ; but even when that is kept steadily in view, the pain of the process of change, the unavoidable hardship must not be forgotten nor disregarded nor despised.

The reader was reminded in the second chapter of the great upheaval caused by the Reformation, and the confusion which followed. There was

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

a great deal, in that age, of making the crooked straight and the rough places plain ; and the process was marked by heart-burning bitterness, dissension and strife, wherever the new ideas of Protestantism came into conflict with those of the old religion. For the new was the condemnation of the old, and the old resented the condemnation. The Protestants assailed the ancient religion, and not without good reason. But those who had loved the old were stout in its defence. Why should these preachers of the new faith come stirring up strife, pouring scorn on the old faith, its worship and its ancient pieties ? How should they be serving God by destroying the holy images of the saints in the churches, tearing down all those things with which the Catholic Church had for ages given dignity and beauty and holy meaning to her services ? Was then the supreme sacrifice of the Mass a blasphemous fable to be reviled and swept away ? Were those who through the ages had found in that solemn rite the expression and the satisfaction of

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

their highest religious needs, were they the victims of a delusion ? Or were not rather these men with their newfangled notions, who dismissed from all reverence the Virgin and the Saints, and threw open the pages of the sacred word of God to the vulgar and the ignorant, were not they the impious blasphemers, as they were heretics and traitors to the faith ? With a little imagination, we can readily picture to ourselves how it must have been, how indeed it was, in those times of confusion ; and how hard it was to make the crooked straight and how the crooked suffered and resisted in the process.

We who are Protestants believe that the Protestant conception of religion is better than the Catholic one ; and my point in that chapter was that the whole idea summed up in Protestantism was a fuller and higher and richer one than that expressed in Catholicism.

If that were so, then it was for the good of the human race as a whole, let alone those who became Protestants,

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

that Protestantism should prevail, that the opportunities of that fuller, richer, and higher life should be brought to the knowledge and placed within the reach of the human race. And if that is so, then the hardship and strife and the rest were the sacrifice necessary in order that that blessing should come to pass. Or would it have been better that it should not have come, if by so refusing it, those who suffered by its coming might have been spared the suffering ? Would it have been better that those who were out to preach the new gospel, to herald the dawn of the new order, should have held their peace rather than stir up strife, should have sought safety rather than face persecution and martyrdom ? For the suffering was not all on one side ; and if the new faith was preached by men whose only weapon was their belief that the new truth was the very word of God, the old faith was defended by men who believed that they too had the word of God, but knew that they had also the power of the sword, the stake, the rack, and the

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

gallows to enforce their arguments. Those were the means by which the crooked resisted the attempt to make it straight. And to overcome that resistance there was needed the sacrifice of all the lives which were laid down in that cause, from the massacre of St. Bartholomew, to the lonely martyrdom of Servetus, spurned alike by Catholic and Protestant, and truer to the ideal of Protestantism than Calvin who burned him, or the host of Protestants who applauded or condoned that base betrayal of the principle for which Protestantism really stood.

If the parallel which I drew in the second chapter between the Reformation time and our own be justified, then not only will there be, as indeed there is, widespread confusion and strife, but there will be with whatever difference in outward expression, the same strain of prolonged effort to make the crooked straight, and the same need of sacrifice in order to make that effort. There will be the same resistance against the change from the old order to the new

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

whether it be based on selfish desire to maintain its privileges for those who enjoyed them, or whether it proceed from the wistful regret for the loss of so much that was fair and good and pleasant in the old. The hardship of inevitable change is part of the price which we shall have to pay, whether willingly or not. And as reconstruction must necessarily involve a re-arrangement of social inequalities, hitherto known as class distinctions, the passage from the old to the new will bring its losses and its regrets, however willingly one may accept the change and acknowledge its justice. For class distinctions have arisen from unequal opportunities and privileges, and have been marked by various degrees of culture, refinement, education, general development of mind and character, producing types which have been repeated for generations. And the equalizing of opportunities, which is the clear demand of justice, will lead, as it is already fast leading, to the effacement of those class distinctions, and

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

with them the types of character and modes of life and thought which they produced. These will disappear, and though the new order will in time produce others, and I doubt not higher and nobler types of character and modes of life, yet they will take generations to produce, just as the old ones did. Until they are produced, the disappearance of the old will be felt as a loss, and will be a real loss. That is part of the price of reconstruction, and those who have to pay it will need a good deal of faith to carry it through. They will need to prepare themselves to meet much that runs counter to their old ideas of good manners and breeding, of habits of thought and refinement of life, and they will find it hard to see anything in the near future to take the place of what they miss.

So it must be. But on the other side is the reflection that the equalizing of opportunities is the sure and indeed the only way of raising up new generations which will grow and attain to heights of development where under the old

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

order only few could come and still fewer did come. Whatever is good in human nature, will have far more ample scope than it had before, to realize itself in life and character ; and it is sheer gratuitous pessimism to say that that opportunity will not be used. Hope and faith point that way ; and it will not be in our lifetime, if ever, that that hope and faith will be shown to be vain. I do not believe they will ever be shown to be vain. But whether or not, the future is in the hand of God, and our concern is with the present, to resolve that no regret on our part, natural though it be, for what is passing away, shall spoil the chance of those who shall come after us. So far as in us lies let us open the way for the younger generations to pass on and mount higher than their elders to the fuller life of the new order.

I pass to consider another element in the price of reconstruction, and that is—disappointment. We have begun to pay that already. When the armistice was signed, when the fighting stopped,

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

we all hoped that there would be a speedy return to peace and order, and the removal of the restraints which had been laid upon the liberties of the subject for the sake of the national safety. We hoped all sorts of good, and there was abundant reason why we should hope ; for a very great deal could have been achieved which has not been achieved. Or so it seemed.

Disappointment grew only more intense as the months went by. One after another the bright visions disappeared in a fog of irresponsible confusion, in which those who ought to be the guides of the nation seemed to be of all men the most hopelessly lost. We were all in the dark, and we had been hoping that the light which shone out when the war was over would shine more and more, if not unto *the* perfect day at least to *a* more perfect day. It turned out otherwise. As we lost the first round of the war, so we lost the first round of the peace, to quote the words of some writer whom I read recently. Time will show whether we can win the

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

peace as the war was won. Of that also I do not doubt, as I never doubted through the war. But meanwhile and for the present we are suffering disappointment, and it is hard. Nothing will make it other than hard. I am not going to say it was unavoidable. I don't know all that has gone on in the secret meetings of diplomatists in Paris and elsewhere ; I don't know all the mistakes which have been made, the misunderstandings, the appeals to passion and self-interest and national jealousy and fear. It is part of the trouble that so much has been kept hidden from public knowledge ; and ' open diplomacy,' which was one of the watchwords of the new era that was to be, has been more signally betrayed than any other. Yet it is much the same with all the rest. Every one of them is a symbol of disappointment. And whether or not it was unavoidable, it is there, and we have to deal with it somehow. The worst way of dealing with it is to take it as a sign that there is no good in hoping and working and trusting. And

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

there is plenty to show that this nation does not mean to sit down helpless under its disappointment, and make no further effort to put things straight. But whatever may be done through the political means which are open to a self-governing people, that lies outside the range which I have marked out for myself in these pages. My present point is this, that disappointment, however it be caused, whether avoidable or not, is in itself part of the price of reconstruction, the bearing of it, merely as a form of mental distress, is part of the sacrifice which has to be made, part of the service which must be rendered. And it would be so even if no hope were left, which is far indeed from being the case. That is to say, it would still be duty, with all the call of duty to brave and steadfast men and women, to bear the disappointment and go forward none the less ; to 'endure hardship as good soldiers,' as those good soldiers who fought and died for us and what we hope for. We have come to a 'no man's land' on our march, and we must

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

cross it without sitting down to mourn over its desolation, or to think that we can never get to the other side, and it is no use trying. Disappointment is, apart from its causes, a fact in itself, an evil perhaps, at all events a form of suffering, and it happens to be laid upon us as any other form of suffering might be laid upon us. It is for us to take it and bear it as bravely as we may, and not to be the less steadily faithful to our task. In that way we shall pay the price of reconstruction in the form demanded of us, in the putting forth of our inward energy of will, our courage and our faith, our determination to conquer. That is the sacrifice and that is the service we can render ; and the disappointment is the occasion which calls for it. Those who are faithful and brave, will see to it that that call is not sounded in vain.

I have reviewed some, though by no means all, of the elements which go to make up the price of reconstruction. The keynote of them all, as I said above, is sacrifice. Sacrifice, in the common

PRICE OF RECONSTRUCTION

usage of the word, means giving up, and especially the giving up of what is hard to part with. It implies pain and loss and the effort to bear these with patience and courage. And why does sacrifice mean that? Because, in the true and ancient meaning of the word, 'sacrifice' denoted what was offered to God what was devoted to him, hallowed, consecrated, sacred. If the worshipper in old days offered a sacrifice, he gave the best he had of what he had to give, but he gave it to God, and therein lay the spiritual meaning and power and worth of what he did. Not in the outward act, the slaughter of some poor creature, or the offering of gold, frankincense and myrrh or what not, but in the will and intention of his mind to serve God, and by so serving him to *make holy* alike what he did and the offering which he brought. That is the true and permanent meaning of sacrifice, and most of all of that which we call self-sacrifice. The things we have to do or bear are in themselves of no more intrinsic worth or significance

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

than the sheep and oxen and whatever else was offered in the older times. But in the one case as in the other, the privation only becomes truly a sacrifice when we make our act sacred as our service of God, when we do or bear what is laid upon us, for his sake and with trust in his help; when we look beyond the thing seen and temporal to the unseen and eternal; when we 'endure as seeing him who is invisible.' That is sacrifice, the stern and splendid duty of men and women in all times and never more than in the present; it is the act of the spirit of man rising up against the pressure of affliction, of disappointment, privation, hardship, grief and loss—strong with the strength of God to serve him still, resolute to take sides with him in a mighty warfare, 'to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.' So we shall offer our true sacrifice, make sacred to God all that we do for him, all that we bear for his sake, and the parting with all that we lose. What if we lost all, so he be served!

CHAPTER VI

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

THIS may seem a too ambitious title.

It certainly would be so if I intended it to cover a description of what the world will be like when it has been reconstructed. I shall not attempt any such description, for the best of reasons that I do not know ; and no one else knows or can possibly know, at this early stage when reconstruction is only being talked of. What I mean by the title I have chosen is to give some indication of the end to be aimed at, the result which may be hoped for, and which certainly can be worked for. To do that is not a vain attempt, but is even necessary if the energy spent on reconstruction is not to be wasted. In the foregoing pages I have tried to show what the

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

need of reconstruction really is, what the underlying forces are which have brought about that need, what is the only permanent foundation on which the new order must be built up if it is to endure and not go to pieces like the old order. I have shown how great a part religion has to play in reconstruction, and how the forces of religion are prevented from common action by the sectarian barriers which keep the churches apart. There is the field of action laid out, upon which reconstruction must be carried on, and the main forces indicated which will have most to do in determining the result.

In this final chapter, I want to show what all which has been said points to ; at all events what it seems to me to point to. I want to bring out some general conception which shall indicate the nature of the new order—not in detail but in principle. Some term must be found wide enough to include not merely one nation but many nations, one indeed which will have room for all mankind. The new order will be in-

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

complete if any are shut out from whatever benefit it might bring to them, if it refused to recognize any good which they might bring to it.

There are several terms to choose from, and probably all will find their advocates. But there are three which are especially worthy of attention because they form a series which has been in part at least illustrated on a great scale in history. The first and second have been tried ; the third has not been tried, for the opportunity to try it was offered but passed by. It should have been the second, but it was put aside, and there has been no further chance for it—none until now. These three terms are : 1st, The Empire ; 2nd, The Church ; 3rd, The Kingdom of Heaven. These are not isolated terms having no reference to each other ; they are connected historically, and they represent three attempts to express the unity of the people denoted by them. As the study of them will be of great help for my present purpose, I will take a few pages to show the part played, at least

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

by the first and second, in history ; and how the change from one to the other has kept pace with that growth of the human mind of which I spoke in the second chapter.

First then of the term Empire, or the Empire. In the ages before Christianity, away back into the dim regions of the past, the most inclusive term by which to describe a large mass of mankind was Empire. All antiquity was accustomed to the sight of some great monarch ruling over many lands, and holding scores and hundreds of subject tribes and peoples under his sway. Such an empire as that of Nebuchadnezzar, or Cyrus, or Alexander the Great, was the largest fact of its kind known in its time. None of these actually extended over the whole human race or anything like it ; but those peoples who were outside were but little known ; and that vague knowledge served to heighten by contrast the splendour and power of the empire and the greatness of its monarch. In those ages no one thought of the human race as a whole ; but no

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

one ever would have thought of the human race as a whole, unless the way had been prepared for that inclusive thought by the actual and visible fact of great empires. For all of them were examples to show how there could be a kind of unity amongst tribes and nations unlike each other in history, in religion, language, manners and customs.

In the time when Christianity appeared, the term 'empire' denoted the Roman Empire, by far the most important and lasting in its effects of all the great organizations to which the term 'empire' has been applied. It did not indeed extend over all the inhabited earth, but it did include within its frontiers all that was most full of promise for the future of the human race on its higher side. All the art and philosophy of Greece helped to give distinction to the Roman Empire. The native genius of Roman jurists and statesmen developed that great system of law which did so much to bind the empire together, and which is represented in the codes of every civilized

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

country to-day. And, in an obscure corner of the empire, hardly noticed except when its intractable subjects brought armies down upon them, there was the Jewish people with their strange religion, destined to become so important a factor in the future history of the world.

Rome acquired her great territories as a Republic ; she held them as an empire. For nearly five centuries in the west, and for ten more in the east, there was (at first, in fact, though later only in appearance) the personal rule of a single sovereign, whose will was law over that wide realm. The type of human unity denoted by the term ' empire ' is seen in its grandest and perhaps most perfect form, in the first century of the Christian era. For it showed traces of a unity different from that attained by, or in, any other empire. Within the empire there was peace ; the subject peoples were governed and protected, and not allowed to war against each other. The Roman legions guarded the frontiers. They

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

faced the barbarian without and kept him back. Behind them, in the lands which they guarded, there was order and quiet ; and whatever was possible of civilization in that age, flourished under the shelter of the Roman peace.

The unity of the Roman Empire was political, and its bond was the authority of law expressed through the edicts of the sovereign. But to a certain extent it was also religious, for the official religion was recognized and required to be recognized everywhere within its domain, alongside of whatever local religion there might be here or there. And only the Jews and the Christians raised any objection to what everybody else thought was a most reasonable and proper requirement.

The Roman Empire then represented in its time the highest type of unity existing amongst any great proportion of the human race. But while the empire was yet at the height of its power and splendour, there came into being another organization destined to represent a wholly different type of unity

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

amongst mankind ; and the name of this was the Church. It began with the small groups of converts to Christianity made by Christian missionaries and notably by Paul ; and it was his practical genius, no less than his fervent preaching, which put these small groups in touch with each other, and made them feel that they belonged to a community and were not a mere local group. What united them was not the political bond of subjection to the same ruler, but the religious bond of worshipping the same God, in the name and as disciples of Christ, believing the same doctrines, practising the same simple rites and observances. This was a very much closer unity than any which could be or had been attained by the empire. There, within the shelter of the Roman peace, and subject to the Roman power, were all the Gentile tribes and peoples, owning no kinship with each other, no rights, no duties, no concern and no interest, even if they were aware of each other's existence. In the Church, all were equal and all

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

were members one of another, in the fellowship of a common faith ; and in this fellowship (as it was taught from a very early date) ‘ there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman ; but Christ is all and in all.’ The Church grew as a visible institution, at first as a secret society, later as an open and avowed religious organization, having its conditions of membership, its officers and rules, its responsibilities and its privileges. It extended everywhere through the empire, and grew stronger in spite of the efforts of the government to crush it by persecution. Failing in that endeavour, and finding that the number of the Christians increased so rapidly, the Government at last, in the person of the Emperor Constantine the Great, proclaimed Christianity as the official religion of the empire, and this Emperor took the precaution, though only on his death-bed, of becoming a Christian himself. The Church had now a legal status, and her rulers increased the

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

power of their organization and strengthened their own authority against the time which they saw to be approaching, when the empire should come to an end. That happened, in the west, in A.D. 474, and the gradual result followed that the growing Church stepped into the place of the fallen empire. In theory the Church wielded only a spiritual not a political power; its members obeyed this or that temporal ruler after the Roman Emperor had disappeared; but all looked with reverence and devout homage to the chosen successor of the apostles, who sat in the chair of Peter at Rome, the Vicar of Christ, the earthly representative of God. The Popes of the Middle Ages wielded an authority greater than that of any emperor, and ruled a community compared with which the Roman Empire was, in point of unity, but a collection of isolated crowds. And although there was a wide range of rank and dignity in the Church, from the lay brother at the bottom to the Pope at the top, yet there was a certain equality in the fact of

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

common membership of the Church, and the great offices in it were not reserved for men of high birth or ample fortune.

The Church was not democratic, but it kept something more than a remembrance of the fact that it began as a brotherhood. The Pope made Kings obey him, but it was not a mere false humility for him to style himself—as he does still—‘the servant of the servants of God.’ The Church at its highest and best did establish a unity amongst a greater portion of the human race than the Empire had included, and a unity of a far stronger and more enduring type than the imperial one, just in so far as it appealed to higher and nobler elements in human nature than the empire had done or could do. Moreover its appeal was to the whole world, as its concern was for the salvation of all mankind. That was what it was for, and even in its worst days it never disowned that purpose.

But there was never a time when the whole human race was included in the unity of the Church. The invitation

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

to mankind was unheard or unheeded by large numbers of those to whom it was addressed. And not only so, it was an invitation on conditions; those who would enter the church must accept the conditions, and obey the authority which imposed them. Those who would not were refused admittance, or were cast out if, after due correction, they refused to submit. The Church has been troubled with heretics from the beginning; and what unity she has succeeded in maintaining has only been won at the cost of expelling or silencing or putting to death those who would not conform to the type of unity which alone she would recognize. From the point of view which regards the Church as a great political religious organization, her theory and practice in regard to unity may be defended, and, of course, have been and are defended. Certainly her policy has been guided by some of the ablest men in history, not merely as politicians but as statesmen, albeit ecclesiastical statesmen. Their theory was quite consistent, and by

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

following it they achieved a great deal of what they set out to achieve. The Church under their guidance did a vast amount of good to the world in general, so far as its influence extended. All this I freely admit, but my point is this, that the Church, whether as represented by this most completely developed example of it, or by organizations on a smaller scale, cannot serve as the type of a unity which shall include all mankind. The Church which took the place of the Roman Empire—and even copied many of its forms and ceremonies—was of course the Roman Catholic Church, and it is the most perfect expression of the *church idea*. I mean by the ‘church’ idea the conception of an institution, devised and managed for the purpose of presenting organized religion. The church idea implies membership and the exclusion of those who are not members, and the test of membership has always been the acceptance of certain beliefs, set forth in the particular creed of the church. Now when the Protestant revolt against the Catholic

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

Church shattered even the appearance of unity, the church idea reappeared in the various religious organizations which were set up. It was not so much that each claimed to be *the* Church, the one only true Church, where all the others were false. It was rather that each was an embodiment of the church idea, that of the organized institution with its terms of membership and its dividing lines of exclusion ; its favour for all who were within its community, its disapproval and condemnation for all who were without.

I am not concerned with the individual members of any church ; what they are or have been does not alter the nature of the church idea, as I have indicated it. And that I am not far from the truth in regard to that is shown by the history of all the Christian centuries which have made theological hatred a byword, and made church history little more than a record of doctrinal controversy, and sectarian bitterness. Time and charity may alter the mode of expression, but from the

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

church idea disunity is inseparable ; and such unity as is attained is only produced by making a cleft between those who are and those who are not included within that unity.

That then is the church idea, the second of the three terms I set out to consider, with a view to finding some conception which would serve for a religious unity of all mankind. The empire idea is manifestly unfitted for this purpose, being mainly political, and only in an official sense religious. No one would dream now of setting up a religious empire. The great Popes did the most that was possible in this direction, and in the end they failed.

But the church idea is also unfitted for the purpose, and that not by the imperfection of its human exponents but from its own inherent defects, such as I have briefly indicated. This has been true in fact all along, as is shown by the failure to establish any really inclusive unity even of a considerable portion of mankind. But in our own day the truth is seen and is coming to be

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

recognized, and that is one of the most significant facts in the present situation. That is the meaning of the wholesale turning away from organized religion which is evident on every hand. Religion has almost universally been presented in a form organized in accordance with the church idea, i.e., through an institution such as I have described, with its limits of inclusion and exclusion its consequent sectarian strifes and divisions. The church idea dominated the old order which the Reformation broke down; but it passed into the new order and it has remained there ever since, and has dominated so far as it could what has become for us the old order. Now that again is broken, and the question is what will become of the church idea? Rather, the question is what will take its place, as the means of effecting a real unity ultimately of all mankind. For the church idea is dead, although the outward forms to which it has given rise still survive. The religion which found and which finds expression through those forms is

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

not dead, and will not be destroyed by anything that may happen to the outward form. Religion has its roots in another region of human nature altogether and draws its life from God. But the church idea, though once it served, under God, a great purpose in the training of humanity, has outlived its usefulness, and serves now only to stifle the religion which seeks expression through it, and to prevent the union of its scattered forces. The religion of the present time needs some other conception in which to express itself, in which rather to express its idea of the unity, and especially the religious unity, of the human race. For the breaking of the old order in our time was due to the pressure of the ideal of justice, and that is a social ideal, tending to the recognition of mankind as a brotherhood; and nothing which stops short of world-wide inclusion will meet its want.

Before going on to consider the third term of the series with which I began, there is one point still to be made

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

clear. When I say that the church idea is dead, I do not mean that worship of God will or ought to be discarded as being out of date. On the contrary, I think that meetings for worship will be more than ever necessary. I showed in the fourth chapter what is the relation of religion to reconstruction, of how great importance it is that the way of communication should be kept open between the religious nature of man and the divine source of its inspiration, that so the influence of God might have free access to human minds and uplift and purify and strengthen them on their higher side. Ever since meetings for public worship began to be held centuries before Christianity appeared, and right down to our own time, it has always been felt that in such united worship there was help and strength for the higher life such as nothing else could give. This is true whatever be the outward form under which worship has been offered, and it is none the less true although meetings for worship have almost always been associated with

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

what I have called the church idea and have maintained to be dead. There is no real connexion. People can worship together if they will, though the church idea be absent entirely. They need only the bond of sympathy to make them able and glad to pray together to the one Father of all. They do not need the artificial bonds of church membership nor the protection of sectarian exclusion. When the worship is real and heartfelt all these things are forgotten.

The decline in attendance at public worship is very widespread and very marked, as every one knows. To those who know the priceless blessing of public worship, that decline is a deplorable calamity. But I take it to mean this—that a vast number of people have definitely rejected the church idea, the organized institution with its inclusions and exclusions, and they suppose that religion and worship are inseparable from the church idea, that worship is not possible nor religion either except as organized in forms which they will

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

not or cannot put up with. I think that they are mistaken in what they suppose, nay, I know they are, because I know, as all in our fellowship know, that worship does not in the least depend on the sectarian divisions which are inherent in the church idea. But I think it may take some considerable time before those who have given up the church idea, realize that religion and worship are not only still possible, but a great deal more possible than they were before. If we have to live through a time when religion seems to have disappeared altogether, then that will be another part of the price of reconstruction; but what it will mean will be that religion, having lost its old means of expression to which it had grown used through centuries, is long casting about for a new one. Religion as an element in human nature, will not die out, because God planted it there. And it is for those who believe in him to hold fast to their faith, and to feel that they betray the trust which God has laid upon them if they lightly

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

abandon their own religion, or help to weaken by the example of their own slackness and carelessness the religion of others.

I turn now to consider the third term in the series of possible types or conceptions of unity. What is wanted is some conception which shall be applicable to all mankind, and which also shall serve to describe the new order which is the final goal of reconstruction. It must be such that it can include and make use of all the highest elements in human nature, its thought, its morality, its religion. It must denote an order, social and individual, where there is scope for all the good in human nature to develop itself, and where there is the call for every one to do and be his best, and give of his best.

The conception which alone will fulfil these conditions is that expressed in the term the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. The term is familiar; it has been known to Christians ever since Jesus made it the central idea of his gospel; it was known to Jews earlier

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

still. But for Christians it has remained just as and where Jesus left it. Nothing has come of it, nothing but lip-service has been rendered to it since the apostles left off preaching his gospel in order to preach *him*. What chance it might have had was lost when, chiefly through the labours of Paul, the Church was founded and the church idea began to take shape. The Church never was the same as the Kingdom of Heaven either in intention or in fact. At the most it professed to be an agency for establishing the Kingdom. The Church went its way and developed on its own lines, as I have said; whatever was possible both for good and for evil within the conditions of the church idea was to a large extent realized. But the Kingdom of Heaven remained a name, with no attempt to explore its possibilities or develop them in practical action. The most fruitful idea that was perhaps ever given to mankind was utterly neglected, for the pursuit of doctrinal speculations about him who gave it. I will not take time to say hard things

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

of the labour that was spent in working out vast systems of theology, theories of church government, creeds, schemes of salvation and the like. These are, or were, necessary accompaniments or consequences of the church idea. If *that* had to be, *they* had to be. My point is that if *that* had to be, then the Kingdom of Heaven could not be. The Church was built up on the ground which the Kingdom would have occupied, took its place, drew to itself the allegiance which would have been given to the Kingdom, with the results that are seen all down the centuries.

Jesus did not found the Church. If he said a word about the Church it is as much as he did, and probably more than he did. The real founder of the Church, the originator of the church idea was Paul. It is true, of course, that if there had been no Jesus there would have been no Church, certainly not the one which is known to history. But the fact remains that Jesus made the central thought of his gospel a conception which was not at all the

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

same as the Church or anything like it.

There are those who maintain that Jesus meant by the Kingdom of Heaven a state of existence only to be realized by some stupendous miracle, and that what he said about it was for his own time alone, and can have no significance for ours. Possibly that was the opinion of those who put aside his idea and substituted the church idea. I do not know, and I do not care. The fact remains that the great words of Jesus have kept pace with the ages, and are felt now to be full of truth and light, whatever he may have meant when he said them. Experience amply bears that out.

Experience has never tried the Kingdom of Heaven, because it never has had the chance. But even if it were true, which I do not for my own part believe for a moment, that the Kingdom of Heaven as Jesus thought of it was a mere apocalyptic dream, it would be none the less true that that great word has truth and light in it for this present age, and power as well; power to

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

inspire, and power to draw to itself the aspiration, the devotion and faithful service of all seekers after God, all in every kindred tongue and people who in their various ways look up to him.

The Church never did and never could do that. The Kingdom of Heaven can, and under the guidance and by the help of God and all the faithful among his children it will. The church idea is dead. The kingdom idea, was dead and is alive again; it was lost and is found. The day of Paul, as the master builder of the Church, is over. The day of Jesus, as the herald and founder of the Kingdom, is come.

There is the true conception of the new order which shall be world wide, including all and shutting out none, for all are children of God and one family in his sight. There will be room and need for the good in every one to be given in aid of the common purpose. It will not be an institution with rules and conditions of membership and officers to see that the rules are obeyed and the conditions kept. The Kingdom of

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

Heaven means the rule of God in the heart ; and those are of the Kingdom who own him there and serve him in their lives. Whether any are faithless or unworthy is for him alone to judge. It is not for man to set up barriers of division between himself and his fellow man. It is for every man to do and be his best in whatever way seems right for him, so that he love his neighbour as himself and learn not to judge his brother any more.

This is not to say that in such a new order everything will be reduced to a dead level of uniformity in thought or morality or religion.

Intellectual uniformity there will never be, and least of all doctrinal uniformity. There will be the same great types of religious belief and practice as there always have been ; only there will not be the rivalry of sects, or the setting up of one religion as the only true and the denouncing of all the rest as false. That was where the Church idea wrought such dire mischief, and that has brought about its final failure.

THE GOAL OF RECONSTRUCTION

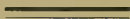
But the Kingdom of Heaven would give full scope to all the religions of the world by which the several tribes and nations live. None but Christians ever could or did work for the Church. But for the Kingdom of Heaven, Christian and Jew, Mohammedan and Buddhist, Parsi and Brahmin, and all the rest could join forces and work together, yes, and worship together if they were so minded. Within the inclusive unity of the Kingdom of Heaven there would be room for any number of minor groups of persons associating for particular purposes through sympathy in common ideas. The nations would endure as nations—at least there is nothing in the idea of the Kingdom of Heaven to prevent their doing so. Within the nations there would be room and use for all collective work for good objects as there is now, probably for much more. But the root difference between the old order and the new will be the removal of all the barriers of sectarian jealousy and social ill will which at present keep men alienated from each other, and dis-

REALITIES AND RECONSTRUCTION

sipate their strength for doing the will of God upon earth.

That is what the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth means, or some part of what it means. And that I say is the final goal of reconstruction. I am not saying that it will come to pass immediately. It certainly will not come by a miracle now any more than it did in the time of Jesus—even if that were what he expected. But it can be worked for now, with hope and trust, in the confidence that here is a sure way from darkness into light, from the disorder and confusion of the present time to the new order that shall be.

So trusting and hoping and working, may all God's children throughout the world go forward towards the light, resolved to serve him in the love of their fellow man, and with the prayer in their hearts—'Thy Kingdom Come.'



BT736.4 .H39
Herford, R. Travers (Robert Travers), 1
Realities and reconstruction.

BT Herford, Robert Travers, 1860-1950.
736.4 Realities and reconstruction. London,
H39 Lindsey Press, 1920.
 152p. 20cm.

1. Peace (Theology)--Addresses, essays,
lectures. 2. Reconstruction (1914-1939)-
Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Title.

CCSC/mmb

A 22489

